

Gratitude of a Cat.

THE cat certainly cannot boast much of its reputation for gratitude ; but a correspondent says " I have met with some instances which prove that there is a diversity of character and feeling in cats as well as men. I was on a visit to a friend last summer, who had a favorite cat and dog, that lived together on the best possible terms, eating from the same plate and sleeping on the same rug. Puss had a young family while I was at the park, and Pincher paid a daily visit to the kittens, whose nursery was at the top of the house. One morning there was a tremendous storm of thunder and lightning : Pincher was in the drawing room, and the cat was attending her family in the garret. Pincher seemed to be considerably annoyed by the vivid flashes of lightning which continually startled him; and just as he had crept closer to my feet, some one entered the drawing room followed by puss, who walked in with a disturbed air and mew-ing with all her might. She came up to Pincher—rubbed her face against his cheek—touched him gently with her paw, and then walked to the door—stopped—looked back—mewed all of which said as plainly as words could have done. 'Come with me, Pincher;' but Pincher was too much frightened himself to give any consolation to her, and took no notice of the invitation. The cat then returned and renewed her application with increased energy; but the dog was immovable, though it was evident that he understood her meaning, for he turned away his head with a half-conscious look and crept still closer to me ; and puss, finding all her entreaties unavailing, then left the room. Soon after this her mew-ing became so piteous, that I could no longer resist going to see what was the matter. I met the cat at the top of the stairs, close to the open door of my sleeping apartment. She ran to me, rubbed herself against me, and then went into the room and crept under the wardrobe. I then heard two voices, and discovered that she had brought down one of her kittens and lodged it there for safety ; but her fears and cares being so divided between the kittens above and this little one below, I supposed she wanted Pincher to watch by this one while she went for the others, for having confided them to my protection she hastened up stairs. I followed her with my young charge, placed it beside her, and moved their little bed further from the

window through which the lightning had flashed so vividly as to alarm poor puss for the safety of her family. I remained there till the storm had subsided, and all was again calm. On the following morning, much to my surprise, I found puss waiting for me at the door of my apartment ; she accompanied me down to breakfast, sat by me, and caressed me in every possible way. She had always been in the habit of going down to breakfast with the lady of the house, but on this morning she had resisted all her coaxing to leave my door, and would not move a step till I made my appearance. She went to the breakfast-room with me, and remained, as I have mentioned, until breakfast was over, and then went up stairs to her family. She had never done this before, and never did it again ; she had shown her gratitude for my care of her little ones, and her duty was done."

MY FRIEND'S WIFE.

CHAPTER II.

[CONTINUED FROM NO. VI.]

IN short, no children made more trouble in school than my friend Barton's. They were ever doing something to excite disturbance ; and as often as they were corrected, appealing to their parents, especially to the mother ; for the father did not so readily hearken to all their complaints. She, poor woman, thought the teacher had set himself with malice aforethought, against her family, in particular.

I well remember how a young cousin of the family was once introduced into the school ; for it was fashionable with school-committees in those days, and in that region, to employ cousins and cousins-german, when no near relatives could be had, to teach school ; and Mr. Barton was that year the committee. Now, said his wife to herself, we shall have a school, I trust, in which my poor boys will not be the victims of constant and unmerited abuse.

Well ; for some time all went on very pleasantly.—James had a little pride about him, and Peter was very much influenced by other's examples. But this did not last long. The disposition remained unaltered. The rattlesnake is the rattlesnake

still, although years may have intervened since anything has provoked his venom. James was at his old tricks, and in due time suffered the 'reward of his deeds.' This consisted—so authority decided the matter, and who shall say with impunity to the schoolmaster, What doest thou?—in holding a long heavy rule in his right hand with his arm extended; and a glass ink-stand poised on the end of it. If he let it fall,—however severely his arm ached,—he was to be punished for that.

The news reached the mother; for nothing that took place in school, especially of such a nature that it ought to have been concealed, was ever kept from Mrs. Barton. It was too much for her to endure! it was a disgrace to her family; and the more so, from the fact that she was 'wounded in the house of her friends.' Had it been done by an enemy, she could have borne it better, and vented her wrath in hard words and reproaches; but coming, as it did, from a relation, she was inconsolable. But her husband had employed the master; and what could be done? She raved, and abused both husband and master.

Suffice it to say that her children went to school again, after a short interval, though never to yield prompt obedience: of this they knew nothing at home or abroad; and they were equally strangers to a government, either of motive or persuasion. So far as fear or force could operate, they were governed—but even then it was by fits and starts—beyond this they were uncontrolled and uncontrollable, like the beasts of the field and the forest. Indeed it is not too much to say that the family scenes to which, when at home, they were constantly subjected, were, with few exceptions, scenes of discord, constant jealousy, crimination, or profanity, not only between the parents, but between the parents and the children.

It was in the midst of influences such as these that another member of the family was introduced. She was beautiful as the Houries, and not only beautiful, but healthy. When she first became an inmate of the family, no cherub ever appeared more lovely; no portrait ever more perfect; no infant ever more lively or promising. She was the very picture of her mother—I mean of what her mother *once had been*—ere her sad fall.

Did I say she was the very picture of her mother? Ah, that alone was enough to shroud the prospect in gloom to all who knew her, but one; she of course thought it the highest

commendation. To have resembled her father, would *with her* have been a thing of only secondary moment.

But though the circumstance of her inheriting the mother's physical properties was deemed—and justly—rather ominous, it was by no means so dark a feature in the picture as one other ; for when all things are favorable there is always hope of so pruning and watering and bending the tender twig that from a crooked stock it may form a tolerable plant. This dark feature of the picture, to which I have referred, I will now explain.

Susan Crawford, from her earliest infancy, had been the creature of excitement. Whatever could minister to her wayward appetites was indulged in. As she advanced toward maturity, she still sought excitement, but in forms somewhat varied with her varying years. For the sugar-toy and a constant stream of raisins, fruits, &c. she substituted the more sparing use of these, and a larger allowance of sauces, preserves, candies, sweetmeats, nice cakes, and coffee, tea, spices, mustard, pepper, green sallads, and occasionally wine, lobsters and oysters. The latter, however, were more generally taken at late evening parties ; for this abominable practice had found its way, to some extent, into the 'fashionable' circle were Susan moved.

When, at any time, she found herself becoming clumsy in appearance, instead of denying herself any of her accustomed luxuries, either at meals or between, she only took a tea-spoonful of cream of tartar every other day, or a portion of 'salts' now and then ; and when she found any redness or grossness of appearance or features, a few tea-leaves, or a little chalk was sure to restore her wonted paleness.

There is no doubt that her vacillating disposition and fondness for moral and intellectual excitement were owing, in no small degree, to those physical habits which had been so long indulged, that they had destroyed every thing in the shape of a regular appetite, and not only rendered her 'nervous' in the popular acceptance of the term, but actually made deep and permanent inroads upon her general health. She could no more have relished a book which contained nothing but the solid and the useful, a companion that was sensible, a lecture that was scientific and valuable, or a sermon that was evangelical, than a meal of nothing else but good bread, or good bread and plain meat, with water for drink. And if she could have swallowed either, for once, she could have endured neither for more than once in succession. The maxim of physiology that a healthy

appetite *prefers* a plain diet, and the more it is gratified with a particular article of plain food, the greater is its aversion to any change, would have been a mystery to her, entirely so. The perfection of happiness in eating and drinking, with her, consisted in eternal variety, not at a single meal alone, but at different meals, and not from principle, (for physiology admits of and even requires variety at different meals,) but from inclination, or rather from the fact that she had a deranged and sickly appetite.

Such, in substance, was Susan's physical state when she became Mrs. Barton. And such still, more emphatically, was her condition when she became the mother of two little boys, and began nursing a third child—a daughter.

'It is an ill-wind that blows nobody any good,' and much as every friend of the human race ought to deprecate the prevailing practice in foreign lands, and the growing one in this, of turning infants away from the mother and placing them in the hands of uninterested, not to say ignorant or vicious nurses, yet I cannot help thinking that had our *little* Susan been banished from her mother's bosom at a day old, it would have been to her 'unspeakable gain,' and might have proved the means of her temporal and eternal salvation.

I have already said that little Susan, when born, was as fair and beautiful as ever her mother had been; and was indeed her mother's very picture in miniature. How much we are what we are morally, in consequence of original physical structure, is a point about which the world are not yet agreed; and hence, notwithstanding little Susan appeared cheerful, and healthy, and promising at birth, it is impossible to say what she might have been under the best influences; though there is every reason to believe she would, in those circumstances, never have become what she now is. There is a wide difference in character formed under the best influences, from that which is formed under the worst, aside from and independent of all native physical tendencies.

'Can a fountain at the same time send forth sweet and bitter?' was wisely asked by an inspired penman;—but it needs no inspiration to enable the physiologist to affirm that of physical, which is here predicted of moral contamination. If there be a truth in the wide world, it is, that the physical structure of young Susan must have continued to sustain daily injury as long as fed by poisoned food; and that the intellectual and moral per-

version of her nature, if not in due proportion to the physical perversion, must have been at least considerable. But the fountain at which she fed was not only poisoned by being formed in a spoiled constitution, but by a continued use of poisonous substances. I ought to have mentioned, before now, that since my friend's wife became settled,—her market made,—she had abandoned, almost from necessity, some of her occasional excitements, but had continued to heat her blood and spoil her nerves, by an increased use of tea, coffee, high-seasoned and animal food, together with the free use of cider, and the pretty frequent use of ardent. While a nurse as well as a mother, she was especially fond of a little of the 'ardent,' now and then ; and so far from using it covertly, as at other periods, she was 'as bold as a lion ;' in the matter ; for she had the sanction of her physician to a little milk-punch ! But—alas for poor human nature !—there was another voice which should have been heard on the question. I mean the voice of God, speaking in faint whispers, (but yet plainly to those that pay close attention,) through the abused and and slowly deranged organic powers of the infant. That voice, however, was unheeded, smothered—and a foundation laid for numerous evils, if not for chronic or fatal diseases.

Nor is this quite all : the tumult of contending and sometimes wicked passions, which often reigned in the bosom of my friend's wife, did not fail to add to the mischief. There are mothers who will admit that their own use of spirits—even of milk-punch, as well as the use of every improper article of food or drink, may injure the health of the child, and perhaps even prove the primary cause of a propensity for the same articles, or for extra stimulants generally—who would startle at the idea of the child's food being poisoned by their own bad passions, their unreasonable fears, anxious or unnecessary cares, corroding fretfulness, wasting jealousy, envy, a savage and self-destroying anger. Yet not the temper of an infant merely, has been often spoiled in this way, both through the influence of food and example ; the health has been again and again undermined, and the soul itself prepared for inevitable ruin, through the same channel.

Would that mothers were wise ! Would that they understood these things ! Would, rather, that those who understand them might be induced—Christian like—to set the world an example of practising what they know, instead of bowing down to the tyrant Fashion ; and while they 'mean not so, neither do their hearts think so,' joining in the passing merriment against what

they choose to call 'speculative and visionary reformers.' Would, moreover, that there were no men, high in places of public trust and sacred responsibility, who sustain the hypocritical crusade against their best friends, and the best friends of the present and eternal interests of their race. My heart rises with a holy indignation, as I trust it is, against those wolves in sheep's clothing, who thus pander to the public prejudices, and laugh to scorn those whom they ought to take by the hand—whose merits they are not capable of appreciating and whose shoes' latchet they are not worthy of unloosing. Nay, more, it bleeds; and the cause of truth, and of virtue and piety, is receiving a wound which it may be difficult to heal. I am wandering, however; but my reader will pardon me, or would do it, if she knew what a conspiracy against her rights, her interests, and her happiness, exists at the present time in some of our 'high places.'

I have been the more particular in this chapter, because the events of the next will be partially explained by it. I have also spoken of the errors of the mother, solely in reference to the education of a *daughter*, and their bearing *on her* present ruined character, for two reasons; first, because *female* education is my subject; and, secondly, because though maternal errors were not powerless in the formation of the character of the sons, yet it seemed more natural to mention them in connection with the daughter;—and because, she was the greater sufferer.

A——.

MY FRIEND'S WIFE.

CHAPTER III.

In short, my friend's house became a scene of envy, and jealousy, and confusion, and strife, and of every evil work. There was never entire harmony, except during the hours of eating and sleeping. The mother was arrayed against the father, and the father against the mother, the parents against the children, and the children against the parents. Sometimes in a contest between the parents, the children were on one side ;

sometimes on the other. I do not mean by this, that they were always engaged in actual open war, even in a war of words ; for sometimes, instead of open hostilities, the war was carried on by stratagem—by intriguing, plotting, mining, lying in ambush, &c.

If, for an example, my friend's wife was for having her sons attend school on a given day, her husband was very apt to want one or both of them at home. If, on the contrary, when leaving home in the morning to go to his labor, he gave *orders*—for all was arbitrary with him—to have the children go to school, it was not uncommon for the mother to keep them at home, and conceal it from him, at least till, excited to anger on some subsequent occasion, she brought it forward in triumph, and to gratify her spirit of revenge.

Thus it was in regard to every thing. My friend, whose better sense sometimes prevailed for a short time, used to say to his wife ; ' Why, my dear, we must try to pull together in these matters, a little more than we do.' But his wife would not bear the mildest hint on the subject, for she fancied her knowledge, and judgment, and disposition unsurpassed in excellence by those of any parent in the whole neighborhood ; and so far was she from making any concessions, or even entering into a kind of conversation that seemed to be based on the idea that concession was needed, that she would actually become irritable at her husband's kind and excellent suggestions ; and it was fortunate if they were not both soon excited to a rage.

And if by chance there was a short cessation of hostilities at any time, among themselves, there was always a war among their neighbors. Sometimes they had done something so **RIDICULOUS**. At others, they were so **PROUD**, or **ENVOUS**, or **HAUGHTY**. In some cases, the objects of their ridicule or contempt were their nearest relations or best friends ; sometimes they were individuals more distant, sometimes other individuals or the children of others were commended or rewarded, at school or elsewhere, and themselves or their own children left in the back ground, or, perhaps, directly censured or punished. To every thing of this kind they were peculiarly sensitive ; and it happened, as it unhappily does usually in such cases, the occasions of thus provoking their resentment became frequent in proportion to their effect on their agitated and disordered feelings.

I have already more than intimated that they were much de-

voted to the pleasures of the table. For besides being excessively gluttonous,—and none was more so than little Susan—they were among the most enormous cider-bibbers in the neighborhood. I do not mean they drank more in a year than many other families in the neighborhood ; but, possessing less forethought, if not a little less self-government, they usually drank up their yearly stores of this sort in a few months, and went without, the rest of the time. Indeed, this was the way with every thing ; for, though my friend's wife fancied herself sick a great part of the time, and was thus incurring a bill of expense for her wretched husband to pay, yet she would eat and drink at a rate which would have astonished those who were only accustomed to see people eat in a reasonable measure and quantity.

There is one thing more. The fondness of the mother, early established for excitement and exciting drinks, now found means for indulgence in the rum and brandy bottles. For besides that the prescriptions of the physician—with shame be it spoken—often included spirits or bitters, and in no stinted quantities, either the gallon or two quart jug went often to the town for something extra. If you ask how the husband liked this, I can only say that he did not often know it, for the fact was concealed, till pay-day came at the grocer's, and then it was too late to prevent what nothing but the avails of his hard daily labor would cure.

But, tired and more than tired, as the reader must be with all this disgusting detail—and I would not have presented it, but for the better explanation of what follows,—I will not pursue this part of my subject much farther. I will, however, add, that it was amid a scene like this, and amid this indulgence of almost every unhalloved appetite and every wicked passion that the minds and hearts—if mind or heart could be said to exist in such circumstances, of two sons and a daughter, originally healthy and happy, at least apparently so, were formed and matured. I will also say, that, so far as looks and actions, and the grossest inuendoes,—nay, even sometimes the coarsest and most obscene language—could go towards destroying every vestige of delicacy, modesty, or purity of thought or feeling ; so far were these three children led at the earliest years of maturity—even a forced maturity—towards the brink of that destruction, from which nothing but a miracle could snatch them.

It was the custom of the people in that part of the country

to throw open their doors occasionally to the young people of the neighborhood, for a party. The young ladies usually assembled, within the distance of a mile or two, before dark, and the gentlemen soon afterward. The evening, till a very late hour, and often till nearly morning, was spent in amusement. Whenever a 'fiddler' could be obtained, the hours were spent in dancing. In other instances—which however were more rare—the hours were employed in other common juvenile amusements. At the breaking up of the 'scrape,' as it was usually called whenever there was dancing, the young gentlemen usually escorted the young ladies as far as the doors of their houses, and if the night was very far spent, then left them. These 'scrapes,' at the time when my friend's family began to reach the years of maturity, were particularly fashionable.

I do not mean to say, that the more respectable among the inhabitants suffered their children to join in these promiscuous and ill-directed dances, though there were fewer exceptions in their favor than some of my readers would be apt to imagine. Still it is true, and I rejoice that I am able to say so, there were a few families of professed piety, especially of the Baptist denomination, who were opposed to them. Not that I wish to give my opinion in this place, against dancing in every form and under every circumstance; but only against the particular method of conducting the business to which I have here referred.

For the worst has not yet been told. The player, or 'fiddler,' as he was commonly called, was often a bad man; and yet he was on the whole looked up to, and expected to give the tone to the conversation, as well as to the spirit of the proceedings. This he often did unfortunately, as it has again and again proved to many a female mind, and to many a hitherto spotless reputation. As if to pave the way however to mischief, spirits were usually drank at these dances; and sometimes very freely. All this exciting conversation, exciting amusement, and exciting drink, in a heating and exciting atmosphere, could not fail of producing an effect. And even if no moral injury were sustained, if none of the finer feelings of human nature were ever blasted while carousing under these circumstances, there is every reason in the world for believing that many a cold, and fever, and rheumatism, and consumption, *should* have dated from these convivial night assemblies.

None were more delighted with these 'scrapes,' than young

Susan ; and nobody threw open their door to assemblies of this sort more cheerfully than the parents. And, strange to tell, the occasion often brought parents in with their children, not to counsel, caution, or advise them, but to help them on, in the wickedness. Many a time has the father joined his son, and the mother her daughter in the giddy—I might say in reference to some instance which have occurred—indecent frolic ; and manifested the same absorbing interest in the sport which was expected of the most volatile young person. I have even known aged fathers remain with their children, at these ‘ scrapes ’ almost the whole night, and then retire as if with reluctance.

There was indeed a great difference in the character and respectability of these midnight assemblies. Some were outwardly decent, and seemed to be of no evil tendency : and there were respectable and virtuous persons at them all. But some there were of a gross and disreputable kind, to which no thinking parents who valued reputation as they ought, would have willingly admitted their sons or their daughters. Of this last sort, were most of those which were convened at the suggestions of my friend’s wife ; for though they were intended *for* her children, and usually by permission of her husband, yet she was, nine times in ten, their prime mover ; nor was any one of the whole party more highly gratified with the proceedings.

These amusements, thus conducted, and often recurring, did much to develop in the young Susan, and in her elder brothers, that character which they have since sustained ; and, to finish the work, whose foundation had been laid in the miseducation of the mother, and the misguided conduct of both mother and father.

Arrived now at a period of life—for he was full seventeen—when he was expected to be constantly and usefully employed, James pretended to labor in the field, with his father. But his services were worth very little. He could never be depended on, especially at any given time. If the work was never so pressing, it made no difference. He complained of the headache, or of some other trouble, and must needs go home, and go to bed ;—not, however, till he had indulged his appetite, largely with the good things of the cellar and pantry. If at any time efforts were made by the father to retain him,—sceptical as the more wary father was in regard to his sickness,—it was to little purpose, for he would run away, and when he did so, he was always protected by his mother ; who was usu-

ally ready to attest with an oath, if the case seemed to require it, (and sometimes when it did not) to the sincerity of her son's professions. Thus James grew up to manhood, or to the usual size of man, unhappy in himself, useless to his father, and still more useless to the world. He had indeed one thing remaining, which was tolerable health.

Peter was still worse than James. Not only was his father unable to place any sort of reliance on him, at any given time of day, but he would actually abscond for several days together ; no one knew whither, except the mother ; and sometimes even *she* was ignorant of his lurking place.

The father tried, indeed, to correct this conduct in his sons ; for he was not so ignorant as not to see its tendency, even beyond the present inconvenience to himself. But the measures which he took were so exceedingly injudicious, that he was always quite sure to defeat his own purposes, and even to increase the troubles which were already thickening upon him. Swearing at, beating, and kicking boys, of sixteen or eighteen years of age, especially when done in a passion, seldom if ever do any good, even were the mother to co-operate with the father ; but when she does not, they result in great mischief, inevitably.

How many times have I pitied this poor father. He certainly deserved punishment, for marrying with the motives that he did ; but his punishment was exceedingly severe. To this time, however, his sufferings had been as nothing, compared with what was to follow. His sons were not yet *wholly* ruined ; besides, he had still left him his daughter ; and though others could already discern in her the symptoms of early destruction, yet it was not so easy, nor so natural to the father to predict evil concerning her. He still had hopes ; and the fond mother felt entire security.

A.

MY FRIEND'S WIFE.

CHAPTER IV.

‘Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it,’ is a maxim of antiquity, and as true at the present time as it was, when Divine Wisdom caused it to be incorporated into the volume of inspiration. In like manner is it true now, as it then was, that if we train up a child in the way he should *not* go, he will not depart from it when he is old.

These I say are the general rules, and they are of almost universal application. I know we are often met here, by what are deemed stubborn facts. We are told that the minister’s three sons, A., L. and B. have all turned out miserably, while the sons of yonder ignorant and drunken father have succeeded in the world to admiration.

Now it does not follow that a man, because he is a minister, is necessarily wise in the management of his domestic concerns, or at least in the important matter of educating a child. Or, if he were, his wife might be otherwise; and every one knows how much of future character depends on the mother. Let the minister’s purposes—nay, and his principles and methods, be never so excellent, and his companion may defeat, and more than defeat the whole of them. Selected as the wives of ministers now usually are, it were a wonder if such were not sometimes the results.

But facts, so far as observations have been made, go to prove that a larger proportion of the children of ministers become virtuous and pious than of almost any other class of people. It is because the contrary so rarely happens, that we dwell upon it when it does.

Nor does it follow that the tree is not inclined, as a general rule, ‘just as the twig is bent,’ because the children of that drunkard become better citizens than A., L. and B. The truth is, they had an excellent mother, who was always, or almost always with them, while the intemperate father was seldom at home. She formed their characters chiefly,—not he. Besides,

he is but recently initiated a drunkard. His children do not inherit his debilitated frame or injured mind, but the sound and vigorous qualities of mind and body which he had six years ago.

Thus much for introduction. My friend's wife had now come to a period of her history, at which every friend and acquaintance might weep, were weeping likely to do any good. She had trained up three children to what they deemed maturity. But she had trained them—how? In precisely the way they should not go; and they were now become as so many messengers of Satan to buffet her.

The eldest son, though in the enjoyment of a tolerable share of vigor, had become, wherever he was known, a pest to society. Too lazy to work steadily, he spent much of his time, in strolling about from place to place, and perhaps join occasionally in some wrestling or drinking party. The nights were often spent in bad company, at plays or dances; and it was by no means uncommon to find him getting into some quarrel. Again and again, has he been known to fight with and knock down some of his companions. I say *companions*; for such he found at first, though they are at last beginning to forsake him. Sometimes his frolics or quarrels cost him a lawsuit, and a heavy fine. The fines, however, he contrived, with the help of his mother, to evade; first by hiding from the officer, and afterwards by leaving, for a while, the country.

He is now married, but it is to a person about as worthless as himself; and as wedded worth is more than doubled or trebled by the union, so wedded misery is more than twice or three times increased in the same way. They live, as the saying is, 'from hand to mouth.' Property, friends and character (dearer than all,) they have not, nor are ever likely to have. To intellectual, moral, and religious enjoyment, which alone elevate man above the beasts that perish—they are almost utter strangers. They are little more than merely *human animals*; and could a whole community of such persons be formed, they would scarcely rank, in point of knowledge, virtue, and social character, above the gypsies; and not at all above the New Hollander and the Hottentots.

The younger son is even more wretched than the other. He is addicted to swearing,—and to numerous other vices too gross to mention—to which his elder brother is believed not yet to have stooped. He, too, has given his hand in marriage

to a stroller ; and for various reasons, which are well known in his native region, has absconded with his bride, to parts unknown to the writer.

And now for young Susan. Alas, shall I complete the dismal tale by relating her follies ? I must ; but I will be as brief as possible.

Unlike her brothers, her health has been for years becoming feeble ; but her intellectual and moral health is far worse. Accustomed to conversation of the most debasing kind, profane language, obscenity, inuendoes, &c. &c., and to society alone that could relish the same, she early became prepared to throw herself away, in a moment of desperation, and fill for herself as well as for her miserable mother, the cup of sorrow which had been for some years preparing, and which must be drunk ere long to the very dregs. At the early age of seventeen, she married a plain but ignorant man, of whom she scarcely knew any thing until a very short time before, and after living with him only four or five weeks, compelled him, I scarcely know how, to abscond ; and he has not for some months been heard from. In a few weeks after his departure, his wife was receiving the visits of a Dutchman about thirty-five years of age, and common report says that they contemplate marriage.

A letter from a friend in the vicinity of the place where Susan now resides, just received, informs me that she got rid of her husband, by ‘ scolding him off ; ’ and adds, that she now devotes her time principally to drinking and eating, smoking, scolding, swearing, and sleeping ; and that her health is extremely bad ; and that her complexion, naturally dark, has now become like that of a ‘ mulatto.’

It is not difficult to foresee what will be the end of this unfortunate family. The mother, however, blinded as all mothers are in similar circumstances, defends her own course of conduct, as well as that of her children ;—and though she admits that they are by no means ‘ perfect ’ men and women, she cannot see, (so she says,) but they are about as good as the children of her neighbors. It is true nobody ventures to torture her by making comparisons to her face ; but comparisons are often made, and they sometimes reach her ears.

Among the instances that are most striking, and which show in the most remarkable manner the effect of maternal effort, is that of a near neighbor of my friend, whose story, as nearly as I can remember, is as follows. The names used, like those of

my friend's family, are fictitious ; but the story is substantially true :—

Mr. and Mrs. Brown began the world as poor, almost, as poor could be, and in external circumstances of no kind superior to those of my friend and his companion. Mrs. B. indeed was the daughter of a dissipated father and of a diseased mother. But she had been bred to hard labor and industrious habits ; besides which, she had been early thrown upon her own resources. In addition to all this, she had cultivated a degree of fondness for reading and for moral and social improvement, and had early learned to govern herself.

The family, like that already mentioned, consisted of two sons and a daughter. These were not early conspicuous for shining qualities, but they were treated with great care by the mother, so far as her time and employments permitted. It is true, after all, that instead of being *brought* up, her children were left, in a great measure, to *grow* up, for she labored almost incessantly, day and night, and her husband too. But what they did, was well done ; and they took great pains if they could do their offspring no good, not to do them any harm.

This family, arrived now at years of maturity, and some of them settled in life, are every one of them respectable, virtuous, and happy. They have not, indeed, made so much noise in the world as my friend's family ; but I believe they do not envy them this species of reputation.

There is another case, of a similar kind, in the same neighborhood ;—with this exception, however, that the family is much more numerous than either of the two former. But the excellence of the mother, as the common sense of the whole neighborhood has long ago determined, has in this case, as in that of the former family, made no small share of the difference.

Let me add once more, that nothing tortures my friend's wife more than to hear of these comparisons. She raves, sometimes, almost like a fiend of the pit. She declares the whole neighborhood set in array against her, for things which, if they *exist*, she is not at all responsible for, but which are a part of the inscrutable purposes of the Almighty.

I would not have troubled the world with this long and painful story, had I not hoped that, horrid as it is, it might be productive of some good. I acknowledge most cheerfully that it were better, as a general rule, to set before mankind examples of quite another kind ;—such as may be expected to allure them

to a wise and virtuous course, rather than drive them from a vicious one. And yet, occasionally, I do think that these awful results of maternal neglect should be set forth, as a beacon to warn the heedless of the rocks on which others—alas! too many others—have been wont to split. A.

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MY LAST PUPIL.--A TALE OF THE DOMINIE.

BY ANDREW PICKEN.

It was before I became a real gentleman and independent portioner of Balgowine Brae, in the west of Scotland, and when I was nothing but an obscure Dominie (although a licensed minister of the kirk of Scotland,) and earning my bit of bread by communicating the rudiments of that learning, which never was the making of my own fortune, to young men for the making of theirs, that the first part of my experience was obtained in the ways of this wicked world.

At that time the obtaining of a good and respectable pupil, who could pay the school-wages punctually at the quarter's end—or even the half year—was, as may be supposed, always a pleasant and comforting event to me; and I not only labored diligently to prepare the minds of my young men for the mighty world, with which they were one day destined to grapple—but it was my way to follow them, after I had dispensed them from my hands, with eyes of interest and affection, wherever I could trace them throughout the various prosperities and adversities which it is the lot of man to encounter on this side of time. If I were to tell all the stories that I could narrate of my pupils—and how the world tossed them to and fro, during my own life—and how some of them became good, and some declined into evil, notwithstanding all the goodly precepts that I delivered to them—the world would be much instructed thereby. But, as the world cares little for instruction, but only for pleasure and amusement, I will withhold them all, excepting only the history of my *last pupil*; in whose fate, indeed, it is quite likely that no one will take half so much interest as myself.

Well—one long afternoon, when my head was quite moidered with the weary din of the school, I was so confused and stupified, that I never so much as heard the noise of a carriage, which, with prancing horses and a real postillion, actually stopped at my poor door. Down went the steps, with a clatter that made all my scholars run to the windows, in spite of my utmost authority, and out came a fine lady and an elderly gentleman; and after them a smart lad hopped from the coach, whom native sagacity at once led me to apprehend to be my own trysted pupil.

The preliminaries were settled between the parents and myself in five minutes after we had been all convened in my best apartment. But, with the mere pounds and particulars, my business was not quite ended; and I began to look in the face of the pupil and of those who accompanied him. I was not so ignorant of this world's vanity as not to know that there must have been some other reason besides the fame of my character and qualifications that should bring such grand people to my country domicile. My surmise was justified by further appearances. There is something painful to the eye in all incongruities. The lady was not yet more than five and twenty and I scarce ever had seen a prettier

woman. The gentleman bordered on fifty, but his look indicated a mixture of sensuality, Scottish greed, good-nature, and imbecility. Yet, though the lady was pretty, even to fascination, I could not say that she commended herself wholly to my approval. I knew not then whether it was natural levity, or a sort of broken-hearted recklessness, that influenced her, as if from the habitual consciousness of having thrown away by one act all life's happiness, and most of its virtue: but the manner in which she handed over her child to my care, though affectionate to extravagance, was not such as I should expect from a staid and sensible parent. With all this, there was, even about the carriage and the lady's habiliments, something that bespoke the motives which had chiefly brought them to my obscure seminary, and that without indicating what ought to have accompanied them. As for the boy, Henry, I was not wrong in judging him to be the best of the group. He was pretty as his mother, and more manly than his father—what need I dwell on particulars? he became my pride, and the pride of my school.

How I instructed my dear and interesting pupil, Henry Fairly, for the several years that he sojourned in my humble dwelling, and how I taught him all manner of heathen learning—as is the fashion—and delivered to him many counsels regarding the affairs of the world into which he was about to enter; as is *not* the fashion—and how I talked with him, in the field and by the way, of all that men should aim at in the perplexities of this world, and all that they should eschew in the midst of its temptations. and how the thoughtful youth hung upon my words and reciprocated my inferences—it is not for me with any boasting to detail. But, before he had quite finished his time with me, behold, a letter came hastily to my hands ordering him home with all speed, for that all things there were in great disorder, and his mother in a dying state. I saw that the time was now come when he was to go forth to the world, being the real prop and hope of his family, and that all my counsels were to be put to the proof. Why need I tell how we parted, or with what blessings I blessed him at the little green end before my door? My pupils have always been to me the promised seed of my pains-taking and my purposes, and even, I may say, of the wishes of my heart—albeit, that I ne'er had a child of my own.

It did not fall in my way to learn aught authentically of Henry Fairly for some considerable time. At length I journeyed to the city, where he had gone to live, but the house to which I had been directed was all shut up and altered. I could hear nothing regarding him such as I wanted to know, and just as I was stepping into the coach to leave the town, a broken-down-looking man, in deep mourning, passed me, leading two pale girls, in the same sombre dress, the former of whom I scarcely recognized as the gentleman, who, with a beautiful young wife

by his side, had visited me in his own carriage not five years before. What had happened to cut off so young and so light-hearted a creature, I knew not; but she was now above a year dead: everything had gone wrong—yet, in the meantime, Henry Fairly, from the abilities he had shown, had been sent out a midshipman in a king's ship to bring home a fortune for his father and sisters.

Time still passed on, and nought was heard of Henry or his ship, nor did the world take any notice of the sorrows of his eldest sister Eliza, who silently bore the weight of her father's afflictions and her own, as she mourned the absence of the hope and prop of the family at their desolate fireside. But the truth soon came out; for, it being then war-time, while men were slaughtering each other abroad and rejoicing for it at home, Henry Fairly's ship had been taken on the high seas, and he was then lying in a French prison.

I now heard something more of the history of this unfortunate family. Henry's mother was the daughter of a man of good family, and, when she first came to this part of the country, was counted one of the prettiest women that had ever stepped on Scottish ground. Being instructed, as most daughters are, that to obtain a rich husband is to obtain everything; she consented to become the wife of Mr. Fairly; and he, with corresponding folly, imagining that the sweet notes of love, may, at any time be sung by a golden bird, and that congenial happiness may be bargained for, and bought, by the mammon of unrighteousness, threw his long saved gains into the lap of beauty, and dissipated his fortune without a day's satisfaction. Domestic dispeace, evil report, and jealousy, complete the tale—family ruin, broken-down feelings, and premature death, complete the tragedy.

But the family were to be renovated and raised up by the energy and abilities of young Henry. At least, so said many—and I said it too, in the simplicity of my heart, until I began to bethink me of what materials the world was made—although I could not deny, but that blocks *may* be cut with razors, by that long perseverance which blunts away the instrument, until its original character is lost and gone. And so I heard with joy that Henry had come home and was already, with his orphan sisters, in the old-fashioned borough of Netherton. With haste and pleasure I arose, and went forth to see him after all his adventures; for the message I had received was mysterious and unsatisfactory.

When I arrived at the door of the solitary house in which his father now dwelt, my admission within was not less invested with a silent and ominous mystery. At length I was permitted entrance into a dark back apartment, where sat Henry's father, having a small stoup of liquor before him, and apparently tipping by himself, with the maudlin enjoyment of that imbecile sort of misery, which, too far gone for common energy, seeks with infantile eagerness this wretched relief from its own thoughts. The smile of pleasure—as if insensible to his own degradation—with which this ruin of a man recognized me, was to me more shocking than the most intense expression of despair; as I contrasted it with the wan look of frigid melancholy which sat upon the countenance of the tallest of the growing

girls, who cowered by themselves in a corner near the window.

"Where is Henry?" I inquired in anxious disappointment.

No answer was given me for a moment; and the father looked at the daughter, as if each wished the other to answer the question—while I now heard distinctly a foot go tramp tramp on the floor over our heads.

"Take a glass with me," said Mr. Fairly—pushing with a silly expression, a glass towards me, "and we will talk of Henry afterwards."

"Is he not here? Where is he?"—said I, refusing the liquor.

"My father does not like to speak of poor Henry"—said the eldest girl—and silence again allowed the same *tramp tramp* to sound with painful monotony over our heads.

"No—there are many things that your father does not like to speak of, my poor child," said the old man, his look of joyous excitement subsiding into pathetic sadness, as he looked upon his daughter and was reminded of his wife.

"For God's sake, inform me," said I, "who that is, that keeps walking about above us in this strange manner."

The eldest girl now arose, and, with a look of heart-broken melancholy, led the way up stairs. Heavens! what I felt, when the door was opened, and Henry Fairly, my clever and handsome former pupil stood before me. He fixed his hollow death-like eyes upon me for a moment, and without uttering a word, threw himself into my arms.

"What is this—Henry?" said I. "Why that changed, that ominous look? Why remain by yourself in this solitary apartment? Why this appearance of affecting desolation?"

"Desolation, indeed! my dear, my more than father," said the youth. "Little did I think, when I went a hopeful boy to sea, that my career was so soon to terminate. But yet I am resigned—I am almost happy—if I could only hope that when I was gone, God would provide a protector for my poor, my orphan sisters."

I soon learned the whole truth—that, in the cold damps of the French prison, where my spirited Henry had lain a whole winter, he had caught a terrible inward disease, that had been slowly eating into his frame: that the only relief he had from his pain was by constantly keeping on his feet, as long as his strength sustained him; and that, in short, in a desolate home, and with all his early hopes blasted, the poor youth was fast walking to his death. I do not remember ever meeting with a severer trial to my feelings, than what was presented to me at this painful moment. The very sense and manliness with which the youth spoke—of the unfortunate end of all his hopes for the renovating of his family, of the state in which he should be forced to leave his beloved sisters, and of his sad, sad feelings on his return home, on finding his father, not only reduced to poverty, but his mind so perfectly broken up, as to be unable to protect his own children—while I looked upon it with pride, as evidencing, that the good seed I had sown in his mind was not sown to the winds, affected me the more deeply for his melancholy situation.

"And why do you not go below, Henry," I said, "instead of wearying out your solitary hours in this naked apartment?"

"My father cannot bear to see me, sir!" he said, "for I remind him so much of my mother that's gone; and I would not vex my unhappy parent, for the few days I have to live—and so I just walk here in this lonely room—and sometimes I almost think that my own sisters neglect me. But grief, you know, sir, is indolent, and I will bear up as I can—for the girls will have enough to suffer when I am dead."

There was something awful in the manliness of this resignation, as well as in the terrible expression of mortality contending with warm-blooded youth, that appeared in the sunken face of my dying pupil; and as he ever and anon pressed my hand, and thanked me for my former instruction, which, as he said, placed earth and heaven in its true light before him. But when I came to say something of his deceased mother, he grasped my arm almost to

pain, and said—"My friend! my more than father! if ever you would do that good in your generation which I shall never live to do—raise your voice wherever you can, concerning the miseries that are caused by unequal marriages for filthy lucre's sake. My mother was fitted to adorn the world—my father was a wise and worthy man with his class. You know what has happened—yet, you know but in part, for the world will never know, as it ought, what miseries the folly of parents entails upon their children!"

Why need I tell what followed between myself and Henry—or with what distress we parted, never to meet in life—or how I prayed over his still-beautiful remains, when, on coming next to Netherton, I found him a stretched corpse—or how his father was hardly able to attend him to the grave? What shall I add more? the old man is dead, and the orphans, beautiful as their mother, are little minded by any, except myself—for it is not the way of the world to care for the unfortunate.

OLD MAIDS.

There is a respectable community among womanhood, whose accumulated misfortunes rarely awaken the compassion, or excite the sympathies of the happier beings around them. It is their usual lot to be severed from the rest of the human race, and frequently (it may be in the spirit of revenge, or, possibly, in order to prove that they are not utterly uncompanionable,) to mingle with the *feline* family, and in return for kindness bestowed, receive treacherous endearments or candid scratches.

They seem 'to stand alone amid a crowd,' 'in the world, but scarcely of it.' They may not join the gay and lightsome, because their very presence checks the hum of merriment, hushes the joyous laugh, and diffuses through the apartment an air of gloom. With *married* ladies they hold little in common, caring not to hear of pleasures, in which they have no participation, and still less, to be the partial listeners to tales of imaginary grievances, and trivial disappointments. If, in the society and conversation of the intelligent and highly cultivated, the antiquated creature finds benefit and amusement, how quickly is she reprobated! If literary *ladies* were her companions, then are malicious tongues ready to whisper, 'She is growing *azure*,' or, 'She seeks to outshine!' If *gentlemen*,—'A-well a-day! She must have a *design* in that quarter!' And thus is the poor lady driven from rational intercourse, a cruelty to which, *probably*,—though I would by no means speak *positively*,—may be attributed her proverbial partiality for *cats*!

But, seriously, there are many members of this neglected class, who, from the elevated, because useful position they occupy in society, demand our highest respect and admiration. Those who, untrammelled by the cares and anxieties which engross the attention of the *housekeepers*, have lived but for the happiness of their fellow-creatures;—who are ever seen in the cottages of poverty, soothing the fretfulness of childhood, curbing the querulousness of age, and speaking peace to those from whom peace had long departed. And there are cases in point, of those who have devoted themselves to *literature*, and

have wielded the pen with a master's hand. To the merit of *Miss Edgeworth*, and *Miss Hannah More* we joyfully do homage, and with gratitude reflect upon the hours of instruction and entertainment derived from their labors.

'These are deeds which should not pass away,
And names that must not wither, though the earth
Forget her empires with a just decay.'

If, as in truth, of many of them it may be said, they are *precise, formal, and austere*,—what then? Shall a *whole sisterhood* be condemned, because *some* of its members are faulty? or, had we not better consider, whether, if the *cause* of this anxiety were unfolded, we should discover more to excite our pity and commiseration, than dislike.

Few there are, whose histories would not present a series of petty wrongs, resulting in mighty sorrows,—few but who could tell of some 'distressful stroke their youth has suffered,' and who, if the veil were removed, would not exhibit a spectacle of withered hope, and blighted affection, and a 'heart that could not break, yet brokenly lived on.'

'Even as a broken mirror, which the glass
In every fragment multiplies; and makes
A thousand images of one that was,
The same, and still the more, the more it breaks;—
And thus the heart will do which not forsakes;—
All still and cold with sleepless sorrow aches,
Yet withers not till all without is cold,
Shewing no visible sign.'

Surely, then, however disagreeable these maidens may be, they should not be merely *tolerated* or *endured*,—but *loved* and *cherished*; and when I, from dire necessity, am compelled to join the sisterhood, let it be remembered, that in my 'youth's summer,' I advocated considerations of kindness and attention; and may they *then* be returned to me in needful frequency, and becoming sincerity.

ANNA.

Philadelphia.

OUR KATE;

OR, BORN FOR AN OLD MAID.

WE can imagine a recluse, who, by constant reading of the lighter fictions of the day and strong imaginative powers, might conclude that all the young ladies of our wide-spreading country were like the angelic creatures described in a story, with beaming eyes, transparent complexion and ruby lips. But fortunately such recluses do not exist, or they are careful to avoid any awakening from their blissful state of ignorance.

From such recluses our heroine would never receive a second glance; and, indeed, so little was she formed to win the general admiration even of the fashionable world, a world not *over* fastidious, that without our kind efforts to draw her forth, we fear she would remain unnoticed. Our Kate was as far from a beauty at seventeen as can commonly be found. To be sure she neither squinted, had red hair, nor was freckled: neither did she stoop in walking; yet she had reached the mature age mentioned above, and no one called her more than good-looking. If you had asked any of the belles and beaux of H—, after a brilliant party, if Kate was there, they would have answered hesitatingly, "yes—no—I believe so—in some corner—of course we saw but little of her." *Of course*; for Kate was sadly out of place on such occasions, and to retire into some remote corner, or draw within the folds of a window curtain and watch those about her, was to her the height of enjoyment.

I will not deny that there were times, when, with her admiration of the splendid charms of her cousin Ellen, there was mingled a sigh for her own want of beauty, for woman will be woman, and there are none who would not choose to be beautiful. But Kate was immediately cured of the sighing if Ellen, from her body of adorers, cast a glance and a smile to the nook where she was; for the cousins were mutually fond and proud of each other, and the best friends in the world. "Proud of each other?" asks some one, "what had Kate, pray, that any one should be proud of her?" My dear reader, she had a well stored and well balanced mind; she was the charm of the winter evening fireside, when sitting with her grand parents and cousin Ellen, for both the girls were orphans; she made them happy by relating to them the most amusing anecdotes she had read during the day, the most interesting of the adventures she had met with in her strolls; in short, without knowing of such an art as that of conversation, our Kate had acquired it perfectly. Then was Ellen the quiet admirer and listener; she had the good sense to know that Kate was far her superior.

Kate had no lovers! Of course not: the idea is absurd: she never thought of the possibility of such a thing, and so tacitly was it understood and firmly was it believed that Kate was "cut out" for an old maid, that it had long been settled between the cousins that whenever Ellen should choose a husband from among her admirers, Kate should play the single sister of her household. But as yet both were "fancy free;" so thought they, and so thought all; and so in fact it was, much as our young minister, who frequently visited the *old folks*, wished that it was not; but as long as he thought his secret unsuspected, he tried to be contented with his fate. It had entered Kate's mind, for she saw more than others from her habits of quiet observation, that perhaps the grave, reserved and dignified Mr. Grey might be captivated by the all-conquering graces of Ellen; for, from time immemorial, she knew that, in cases of love, it had been a settled principle, that unlike qualities should unite; and Kate liked him well enough to wish him success. Ellen saw his superiority and confessed to herself the love of such a man was worth winning.

A slight look from Kate, with the slightest possible smile, when Mr. Grey was the subject of praise—as a minister always is in a little town—revealed to Ellen the suspicions of Kate, and with her eyes now opened to the subject, she determined to understand how the matter stood, for she could not deny to herself that she felt a pleasure in believing Kate right.

"Is it possible," said she to herself, "that Mr. Grey and I are in love with each other, and that only Kate knows it?" Ellen was no novice in love, and she knew every symptom of an incipient love *affair*; when Mr. Grey, therefore, entered for his usual morning call, he was subjected to a close scrutiny. He came with his usual gifts of wild flowers for the young ladies and cheerful chat for the old people. With the air of gallantry to which Ellen was accustomed, and an easy flow of compliment, he presented a bunch to her, but proffered in silence the remainder to Kate. "This is rather mystifying," thought Ellen, "can Kate be wrong?" and, as she again looked up, she saw that his eyes still rested on Kate. The truth flashed upon her. "It is Kate herself," she said. Her opinion was confirmed when she noticed that her own flowers were the gay and gaudy ones which the careless loiterer cannot fail to notice everywhere, while Kate's were those sweet and modest ones which must be sought beneath the tall grass and among the thick hedges.

And how did Ellen feel under this conviction? First there came a pang of wounded vanity; then an earnest "thank God I am yet heart whole;"

then a generous wish that Kate might return his love, and then a glow of girlish triumph that for once she was more clear sighted than Kate.

It was some months after this, and Ellen had kept her secret most discreetly, when, during a sunset ramble, they were joined by Mr. Grey. Their stroll was so wandering and unsettled in its plan that each occasionally left the others, in pursuit of flower, or berry or bird, and Ellen, in unusually high glee, was flitting about like a mere child when it suddenly occurred to her that, though Kate was constantly calling her back to admire something which Mr. Grey had found, the gentleman showed no particular anxiety to detain her.

"Please Mr. Grey," said she, "may I have leave of absence for half an hour? I don't like to be 'de trop,'" and with a laugh at Kate's look of consternation and Mr. Grey's rising color, she darted off into a shady path, and was soon out of sight.

I have admitted that Ellen was discreet, and instead of joining them at the end of a half hour, she walked quietly home, and telling her grand parents that Kate had strolled farther with the minister, she *tried* to wait patiently her return. It was quite dark, and the old people were getting anxious before this happened, and then Mr. Grey stepped in to say Kate must not be scolded, and so bade good night to all, with a pressure of the hand to Ellen, so kind that she could not help laughing and asking his forgiveness for running away from them, and thereupon the minister said, "God bless you Ellen," with an earnestness that proved it to come from his heart, and was off.

"Cousin Kate," said Ellen, whispering to her cousin. "I hope for the future you will value more my sagacity and penetration, and believe if I am a belle I am almost as wise as you."

"Wiser a great deal, and the best cousin in the world," said Kate, and she kissed Ellen so affectionately that the old people wondered what it could all mean.

I will say nothing of the gossip of the town, when it was known the next day that our Kate, so nicely adapted to an old maid's life, was to be the wife of the minister.

* *

PEGGY BIGELOW ;

Or--the Uncomfortable Courtship.

BY C. F. D. ESQ.

[The following tale, has been handed to us by its author, and for the favor, we beg he will accept our most sincere thanks.]

PEGGY Bigelow was perhaps the prettiest piece of 'red and white' that ever weeded onions in all Wethersfield, and was indeed so confoundedly pretty that she had not only become the envy of all the onion weeding damsels, in that famous town, but the object of attraction to almost every sleek visaged and hymn singing beau who was in the habit of meeting her at a quilting party or at the 'Meten House' of a Sunday: not one of whom could approach Peggy with dry eyes—especially in onion time! All were smitten—absolutely bewitched by Peggy Bigelow; and my readers will believe this latter assertion the more readily, as Wethersfield has from the earliest times, been full of witches; several having been shot there with silver nine-penny-pieces, some hung with hair ropes and one in particular, executed under the shape of an ugly, shag haired Newfoundland water dog; which doubtless gave rise to the ancient legend of the "Wethersfield puppy," which upon another occasion appeared to a raw Paddy whack of a fellow, recently from "ould Ireland;" and which Paddy at once recognized on catching it in his arms, as a "vary praty sort of a puppy which must belong to some gentleman in Weathersfield—he smelt so wontherful strong of *inyons*,"—being nothing more nor less than a *skunk*. I have no doubt I say that this was the same dog, but still I had no right to mention it, because it is a digression, and has no necessary connexion with my story; which is simply to talk about Peggy Bigelow, and her unhappy lover, Mr. Jonathan Gillet, the hopeful and promising descendant of Master Lord be with us *alwavs evermore* Gillet; who was commonly called by way of brevity *Evermore* Gillet; and who resided somewhere in the same town that became afterwards so celebrated for a night attack from a tribe of vagabond frogs. Here's another digression, some snarling fellow will say, I suppose; but if I stop to make excuses for every digression, how the deuse shall I ever get to the end of my story. The young lady whose name I have set down with a determination to immortalize by this impartial biography, though in all other respects a genuine Connecticut country girl, and consequently every thing that is charming, was slyly suspected of some propensity to romping; a propensity so entirely anti-puritanical, that it gave "*much exercise*," and caused much "spiritual wrestling," not only among the fathers of the church, but to the father of our heroine, Mr. Obadiah Bigelow himself; who had a most inveterate aversion to "dalliance," of all sorts, and who is said to have been one of the identical men who whipped the beer barrel for *working* on Sunday. Mr. Jonathan Gillet belonged to the learned professions; being

an itinerent singing-master; and being also the son of a congregational deacon, he had been from mere instinct, an exceedingly "Godly Youth," his whole life through; though I am obliged to confess, that his companions pretty generally looked upon him as very much of a knave—a suspicion that I have no doubt was utterly groundless inasmuch as he belonged to the church. And now, as I am about to introduce him to his first interview with the heroine of this history, it will be expected perhaps, that I give some account of his "outward man;" after the fashion of Cooper. Here gentle reader you are mistaken. I only ask you, not to think he looked like Cooper's rigmarole, called David Gamut; since that *burlesque cren upon caricature*, is as unlike a New England singing master, as it is to any other object, celestial, terrestrial or *sub-terrestrial*. Our professor of crotchets and quavers having taught most parts of Connecticut how to make Sternhold and Hopkins still more ridiculous, by singing King David's Psalms to music even more wretched than the metre of their versification, "located" himself for the winter of 1700 and—we forget what, in the town of Wethersfield anciently called *Piquag*.

Here he immediately opened a *singing school*, and having brought letters to Deacon Frisby, Squire Hooker, and Mr. Jeduthan Longexperience, his school was speedily "made up;" Miss Peggy Bigelow being among the first that joined it. And luckless was the hour to the singing master, in which she *did* join it; for he fell desperately in love with Peggy before he had got her half way through the "eight notes," and had there been a ninth one, Jonathan's fate would have been sealed upon the spot; as he uttered a very dying sigh between the seventh and eighth! In short, Jonathan Gillet was over head and ears in love, and that too, most disinterestedly; since he always declared that he cared nothing for her property, though she was the only child of a rich farmer then very old, and Peggy's patrimony was considered almost as good as in "possession." He did not fail to open his feelings very soon to the young lady; who being quite as prompt in laughing at him for a fool for "such nonsense," he forthwith made application to her father and mother. Here Jonathan was completely successful; for to these pious people, Jonathan "had charms." He was an extremely religious young man. So much so, that he actually told her parents, that his love was altogether for her "immortal soul." He had such a desire to be instrumental to her salvation, and to lead her in the ways of godliness, that he should certainly die an early death unless they would consent to his undertaking the task. To avert which calamity, and get their daughter "well married" into the bargain, Mr. and Mrs. Bigelow gave their full consent. Smoothly however as Mr. Gillet seemed to swim, he soon found to his cost, that his tribulations had but just begun. where he flattered himself they were ended. Our

heroine had no idea of submitting to be "led in the ways of righteousness," by a canting, hypocritical teacher of psalm singing: and very frankly told her parents so, at her first interview with them, after Mr. Jonathan Gillet's departure. "I marry 'that squinting, blear eyed, bacon faced, and shingle sided fright? I guess so! Why Lord, mother, I'd sooner marry Captain Balcomb's russet headed trumpeter, either for his looks or his music—aye and his piety too as you call it, for he's an *otherguess* man in either respect. None of your Jonathan Gillet's for me, if I know it." After this and a good deal of similar language from the young lady, her parents saw fit to let the matter rest for a while: nothing doubting it would "come out right enough at last," and Peggy was dismissed with an admonition to "think better on't." Here matters rested with this interesting couple; and here we must rest also until we take a fresh start in a new chapter of this most interesting of all histories; not even excepting that of Cid Hamet Benengeli.

CHAPTER II.

Mr. Singing master Gillet after his first very comfortable interview with the parents of Peggy, looked upon his matters matrimonial, as pretty nearly or quite finished. A deception, however, that was removed the first time he repeated it; for our heroine "opened her mind" to him in terms as decided, as they were mortifying to him of the pitch-pipe. She was a shrewd and sensible girl, and could, upon an emergency like the present, assume all the dignity of her sex. After submitting to the penance for some time, of a drawling, whining—sickening homily on love; half song and half a sort of muttered recitative, from that awkward journey work of humanity, she told him with great firmness that it was quite unnecessary to proceed any further; that nothing earthly would induce her to marry him, and as to any *heavenly* reward, which he talked so confidently about—she had much rather receive it through some other medium. He was an impious wretch she said, and she believed a most thorough hypocrite; but however that might be, he was sufficiently disgusting to her in other respects, without giving himself any further trouble to become more so. After which comforting declaration she abruptly left our astonished swain to the sole use of the room, and to the undisturbed exercise of his meditations; which though they were not of the most complacent character, left him by no means disposed to "give up so," as he elegantly muttered between his teeth on going into the room occupied by old Mr. and Mrs. Bigelow. These worthy people, heard with grief the result of his dialogue with their daughter, but exhorted him to "final perseverance,"—which they very devoutly believed in, in more than one sense of the doctrine. In short, Jonathan became a great favorite with this superannuated couple, and in a very short time he succeeded in making it as much a point of conscience with them, as they had already made it of prudence to bring about a match between their intelligent and interesting daughter, and this hopeful quack in music, and burlesque upon good manners. He became almost an inmate of the house. He "led in family worship;" repeated to the old folks the Reverend Mr. Thumpcushion's sermon, on a rainy

sabbath evening, when these pious people had been unable to attend meeting. He murdered Old Hundred, Mear, CXIX, and divers other of his then Majesty's loyal presbyterian tunes. All these were sure to suffer martyrdom whenever Mr. Jonathan Gillet made a visit at the house of our heroine. His visits, always hateful to Peggy, had now absolutely become intolerable. She was persecuted on all sides; by her parents upon one hand, and her hymn singing tormentor on the other. She gave no ground however: till at last Mr. Bigelow and his wife actually became enraged at her obstinacy as they called it, and declared in their wrath that she *should* marry the "pious young man, *willy nilly*." Matters having come to this extremity, Peggy, though quite unshaken in her determination never to become *Mrs. Gillet*, changed her mode of defence, and determined on a course of honest deception, which should answer her object as well; and she doubted not but she should manage to rid herself of him and be revenged at the same time for the vexation he had given her. In pursuance of this resolution she commenced the series of cross purposes upon honest Jonathan, which will render the remainder of this history so much more interesting and edifying than any that ever was written before. She affected all at once, to feel great resignation to the will of her parents, and even had the philosophy to demean herself quite graciously to Jonathan. "Her parents, she said, knew much better than she did, what was best for her, and if they and Mr. Gillet would give her a little time—they might depend upon her word—she would marry." This declaration gave of course, great comfort to all parties: and the truce was duly agreed to. In the mean time Peggy had made counter treaties with several of her friends in the neighborhood, and opened her covert campaign against the singing master, with the advice and assistance of several very efficient allies; for her enemy had become an object of pretty general dislike in the parish. Among the most potent co-workers which Peggy had enlisted in her cause, were Miss Rachael Rhubarb, a lively Wethersfield damsel, said to have been a descendant of Peter Stuyvesant's trumpeter, and Bill Bramble, a smart and handsome young fellow of the neighborhood, much given to fun; considering the age he lived in, and the great pains that had been taken to "sober him."

Thus assisted, our heroine only waited for a favorable opportunity to commence the operation of her schemes. Jonathan, since the recent change in her deportment towards him, had been in raptures; and was if possible more unendurable than ever. He professed the most unbounded and "unmatchable" love, vowed eternal constancy, and declared by every semiquaver in the whole gamut, that Peggy was the only one on earth for him. That "millions of money," could not tempt him to love another, though she were as "beautiful as the Queen of Sheba, herself," as he very pathetically expressed it. Peggy listened to all this fustian with great seeming complacency; knowing quite well that her revenge for it was near at hand. The same evening, that mischievous wag, Mr. William Bramble, whispered as a great secret to the singing master, that the aforementioned Miss Rhubarb, was most desperately in love with him; and advised

him in the "bowels of mercy" if he had any regard for the life of a beautiful young lady, to go and see her. Now the truth is, Miss Rachael had never before been accused of possessing any beauty; being what is called rather hard favored. But a rich uncle had recently died and left her a legacy of two thousand pounds "lawful money;" so that Mr. Gillet's "eternal constancy," to Peggy, took wings the very next morning, and the evening after, it was transferred amidst many a nasal protestation and affected sigh, to the heiress of two thousand pounds. That young lady, who of course was in the secret, and indeed one of its projectors, received him very kindly; appeared, sure enough, to be *dreadfully in love*; but gently reminded him of his standing with Miss Bigelow. Whereupon Jonathan let off a most tremendous volley of contempt for Peggy: called her a homely, saucy slut, and no more to be compared with his present charmer, than a quaver was to a semibreve. Rachael affected indisposition, and just hinted her wish for Mr. Music Grinder to depart: who being right well convinced, that it was genuine "love sickness," went very willingly: after obtaining permission to come again the next evening, which was Sunday. Upon that day Jonathan's whole man was clothed in fresh garniture; and this perhaps is as good a spot as any I shall find, to stop and give some feeble description of him, and his wardrobe. Jonathan Gillet was full six feet "in the clear" and would have been about four inches more, had nature suffered him to stand straight; but this she had utterly denied him the power to do. She had however given him a good *understanding*, having placed the mass of mortality which I shall describe from bottom to top, upon a pair of feet, which bore a striking resemblance to a couple of flattened firebuckets. His ankles and legs had nothing remarkable in them, except that the former were placed exactly in the middle of the aforesaid feet, and the latter were precisely in the fashion of a butcher's gambrel—Jonathan was by no means, however, knock-kneed, for the curvature I have described, was in an opposite direction from the one which produces that deformity. Indeed the singing master was so long between joints, that in describing his legs I have almost anticipated the whole portrait; for he had very little by way of body, and as to neck, it was left almost entirely out of the workmanship. Yet Jonathan *had* a body, though a very short one, and nearly overshadowed by his shoulders. But it was in the upper story that Jonathan was most interesting; having great rotundity of head and a fine countenance, except that perhaps a connoisseur might object to his complexion, as looking too much like a seed squash. His eyes were both good, and would have been still better had they been of one color, which unfortunately was not the case; nor were they quite uniform in the direction of their vision—one of them having that unlucky obliquity, which the vulgar are apt to call a *squint eye*. His nose was very much admired, and justly so; being a very good nose, though some of his friends were afraid he would never be able to wear spectacles; since the olfactory organ aforesaid, furnished no conveniences for the purpose; being in that part nearly even with his face. But his mouth was strictly a professional one, and seemed made on purpose for a singing master; as would

strike the observer at once, from its great capacity for letting off sound in any quantity; being indeed so large that he could never shut all parts of it at once. His teeth were very fine, but seemed to have more of the Ebony than Topaz in their composition, and two of them constantly stood sentinel outside of his mouth, while the other did duty within:—

"Tall was his form; his hair, coal black,
 "Hung like a linch pin down his back.
 "An eel skin kept it in its sack
 "With gripe of French fraternity."

Such was Jonathan Gillet in his person; his costume upon the Sunday he attended Mr. Thumpcushion's meeting, preparatory to the visit to his new sweetheart, was unusually smart and attractive; consisting of a spruce macaroni, (to reverse the order of his personal description,) a sky blue coat, made in the fashion of the day, with white metal buttons nearly the size of an old fashioned pewter platter, a red waist-coat very like in its cut to a quaker's coat buttoned up—a pair of *shorts*, precisely the color of brimstone, fastened at the knees by block tin buckles, studded with blue glass; a pair of fine woollen hose, clouded blue and white and embellished by a pair of enormous clocks, very much resembling in one respect, those of his successors in that land—for Jonathan's clocks could never be made to *keep time*, even to a three stringed fiddle. In this garb, he went to pay a second, and as it turned out, a final visit to the heiress of two thousand pounds. And thus endeth the chapter—though it only just beginneth the *interest* of this truly interesting story.

CHAPTER III.

Jonathan's figure at Church excited universal attention. Miss Simpkins admired his buff breeches, and Miss Pinkins was in raptures when she saw his sky blue: his scarlet waistcoat quite captivated Miss Polly Hopkins, and an old maid, nicknamed in the neighborhood *Wait forever Williams*, but whose baptismal name was *Waitstill Williams*, fell violently in love with his glass *brilliants*. Peggy Bigelow and Miss Rhubarb were both at church, and both honored the singing master with their special attention; while Jonathan was quite impartial in his notice of them. For having the faculty of looking "nine ways of a Sunday," a faculty derived from the ocular obliquity which we have already mentioned, he found no difficulty in looking on both young ladies at once, though they were seated in different parts of the church. The expression of his two eyes towards the rival candidates however, was as different as their color, for while the one directed to Miss Rhubarb spoke a marvelous deal of love, the other which was fixed upon Peggy, seemed to say—"I have done better,"—Peggy affected great dejection; and Rachel met the gaze of his other eye with a most killing smile, which Jonathan failed not to translate—"pray don't break your promise of coming to-night." And sure enough he did not. He went home from singing school, with Miss Rachel, and set down in a snug room to "spend the night," as he thought, in settling matters with the young lady, about taking possession of the Rhubarb legacy, personal and pecuniary. But in the midst of all his happiness, and in the very middle of one of his most impassioned

protestations, our heiress got up, opened an inner door, and invited into the room, her brother and some other young men who had placed themselves there for the purpose. They came in, and to the utter confusion of Mr. Jonathan Gillet, Rachael addressed her brother in *hæc verba*: 'Here is a fellow who has been persecuting me with his professions of love; when I know well enough that he only loves my money—which consideration is my only comfort, for if I thought there was any thing of that passion enclosed in such a carcass as his, I would forswear the feeling and declare at once for Aunt Charity and old maidhood. But above all, if I thought such an object as this Jonathan Gillet could feel any thing like love for me, I should die of a vertigo, for even looking at him makes my head swim. You know how he has treated Peggy Bigelow. In short he is perfectly hateful to me—he has insulted me; and you will very much oblige me by putting him out of the house.' Jonathan 'rose to reply,' but young Rhubarb told him to 'shut his clapper;' there was no use in palavering about it—he must just tramp; and seizing the 'handle of his face,' while another young fellow laid violent hands upon the nape of his neck, Mr. Jonathan Gillet was very unceremoniously pushed out of the door; Bill Bramble giving him a sort of supplemental kick, *a posteriori* as he passed the threshold. The singing master however was not conquered without a struggle; and so much the worse for him; for it ended in the utter discomfiture, not only of his hymn book, pitch-pipe, and a whole volume of manuscript gamut, but of his brimstone shorts. His whole musical paraphernalia was scattered in the puddle into which he was thrown, and the shorts were most unmercifully tattered. His black eye was beaten blue and his white one pummelled black; in short his whole face exhibited as pretty an Irish landscape as ever was drawn upon Paddy's countenance at a wake or a wedding.

Jonathan went immediately to Squire Hooker for a 'precept;' which was granted, notwithstanding its being Sunday evening, as it was a 'criminal matter.' The next day a solemn trial took place, Jonathan Gillet *qui tam*, vs. Hector Rhubarb *et al*, for assault and battery upon said Gillet. Squire Meddle appearing for the prosecution, and Mr. Barnabas Quibbleworth another country attorney, for the defendants. Mr. Meddle spoke three hours and Mr. Quibbleworth three hours more in arguing the case.

The former in his opening, told his worship that this was an action or prosecution, (being a mixed suit) called an action of trespass: 'not an action of trespass *quare clausum fregit* your worship, but an action in *personam* merely. Jonathan here interrupted his counsel, and told him he was mistaken. It was an action of *wherehe claus* 'em seize it, and pointed to his demolished breeches for the truth of it. The learned counsellor replied to his client that he himself was wrong. 'I know the law,' says he, 'from knuckle to thumb,' and though your breeches show *breaches*, (they had learned to pun even thus early in Connecticut,) which were inflicted by no *moliter manus imposuit*, I tell you this action is not technically called an action for the breach of your close. Jonathan nodded assent, and Mr. Meddle went on with his argument.

Mr. Quibbleworth followed. He pleaded *son assault demesne*; and as it was proved that Mr. Gillet previously to his being laid hold of, had lifted his right hand towards the defendants, the court sustained the plea, and found all the defendants *not guilty*; though it was afterwards ascertained that Gillet raised his right hand aforesaid for no other purpose in the world than simply to blow his —. However the result was, that the singing master not only lost his music, his eye sight and his breeches, but he lost his *case*, and had 8s. 4d. to pay in cost, besides five shillings to his lawyer.

Contrary to Peggy's hopes—for she thought this adventure would cure him, Jonathan renewed his visits, and increased his importunities in the Bigelow family. He told his own story to the old Bigelows, and the superannuated simpletons not only believed it, but became more anxious to see Peggy well married to him. Peggy was obliged to temporize—she and her allies still carrying on the war with Jonathan. She promised upon a particular night to ride behind him to a 'quilting party,' if he would call for her at a neighbor's house after dark, and promise not to say a word to her until they were returning home. He called accordingly and took up a young woman closely muffled, carried her to the place and led her into the midst of the company in great formality: when behold, what he thought Peggy Bigelow, turned out to be a young African lady, which Peggy had prevailed upon to stand proxy upon the occasion; and when Jonathan was about to inflict corporeal punishment upon Suzy for the scandal she had brought upon him, the whole company interfered, and told Jonathan that they would suffer no *Lady* to be treated thus. He had probably come to the wrong place, as no black people were expected there, and he might take his partner and go farther—they certainly could not think of suffering him to remain; showed him the door and bid him good night. Upon another occasion Peggy went with him by particular invitation to an evening party and returned home with Mr. Bramble—Jonathan muttering home behind them. The worst trick, however, that she or her mischievous compeers ever passed upon poor Jonathan, happened soon after. Jonathan was suffered to accompany our heroine and a large number of other young ladies and gentlemen to a great *Regimental Training* at Colchester, some twenty or thirty miles distant. It was determined during this excursion to make a public exhibition of Mr. Gillet. Accordingly the male part of the cavalcade made up a purse and purchased a hogshhead of molasses, an article always very cheap and plentiful in Colchester, placed it on the end, and so fixed the upper head that the least weight would knock it in. When it was time to return home, the whole company had assembled. Jonathan, dressed in his 'very best,' gallanted the ladies to their horses, and was on the whole, cutting a great swash. The whole regiment, and hundreds of other spectators, were looking, as Jonathan thought, with admiration upon so accomplished a cavalier; when going to his own horse which the conspirators had taken care to place near the molasses hogshhead with a block by the side to serve as a step, he seized the reins, jumped on the hogshhead, and in an instant was up to his elbows in molasses. With a little help he was drawn out, the

sweetest beau in all Colchester! We need not attempt to describe the shoutings which this disaster produced among the crowd which witnessed it, nor Jonathan's mortification—both were indescribable. His Wethersfield company told him they could by no means wait till he was *repacked*, and rode off; leaving Jonathan to go to bed till his clothes were washed, and afterwards to budge home alone. After he had got his clothes purified—Jonathan's mind was for some time in great dubiety. Whether to return to the land of onions, or to go back once more to Windham was the question; but his love for Peggy Bigelow (we mean for her estate) prevailed over the Colchester molasses, and he went back to *Piquag*. It was an unwise determination; for nothing but mortification and disaster awaited him in that pugnacious town, as will appear by this history:—No sooner had he returned and recommenced *harmonicide*, than Peggy and her co-tormentors, re-opened their campaign of tantalizing vexations. Mr. Gillet had been invited to take charge of the choir at a neighboring 'Association,' which is an ancient and highly respectable assembly in that state; being a convocation consisting of the Clergyman and a lay delegate from each Congregational church within its jurisdiction, convened for the transaction of church business. He made great preparations for the important occasion, and discharged the functions of his profession very satisfactorily. But it so happened that Bill Bramble, (by Peggy's request) was there also; and so was young Rhubarb, Jim Spifflins, and Mr. Timotheus Teazem, the worst wag of the whole, and one of Peggy's admirers. They so contrived it just before Jonathan started homeward with several Clergymen, as to apply a cataplasm of red pepper to certain parts of his horse, (under the saddle perhaps,) and though he had been a respectable, and highly decorious beast heretofore, his master had no sooner mounted him than he cut up all manner of unseemly capers, kicked, reared and run away with Jonathan, *ala Gilpin*; to the great scandal of such reverend company, and to Mr. Gillet's utter disgrace and discomfort.

CHAPTER III.

Jonathan's horse certainly seemed this day, to be his master's evil genius, for after having exhibited him in all the ludicrous attitudes I have described, and divers others which I have left unmentioned, being entirely undescribable, he chose one of the unluckiest spots upon which to wind up the catastrophe, ever heard of in horsemanship. Our hero had been kept vibrating between the Heavens and his horse's back for the space of ten minutes, struggling for life to save himself from the utter disgrace of an unhorsing. While in the "full tide" of the experiment, and while the ecclesiastical cavalcade aforementioned was endeavoring to keep in sight of the unfortunate singing master, in order when he should come to the ground to yield relief in the premises, Jonathan's peppery charger wheeled suddenly to the left, and in attempting to leap a pair of bars partly left down, fell with a fearful plunge: tossing Jonathan with frightful velocity over his head, into a bed of soft mortar. The spot chosen for the utter prostration of the unhappy Mr. Gillet being nothing more or less than a brickyard.

The clerical company alighted and endeavored to extricate him from his perilous predicament, but had not succeeded when the projectors of the disaster arrived and tendered their assistance in great seeming condolence. Though Mr. William Bramble could hardly succeed even in a pretence of seriousness. "Up to your eyes in business Mr. Gillet," says Bill. "Fairly stuck at last, Mr. Demy Semy," says Jim Spifflins: while that sad dog, and ingenious contriver of all mischief, Mr. Timotheus Teazem, stretching his queer phiz to its utmost elongation of pseudo gravity, thus commenced with the fallen cavalier—"Truly friend Jonathan, thou art as it were, in the horrible pit and miry clay; and there, for ought I see thou must remain without benefit of clergy, as squire Meddle saith; for I question whether these reverend gentlemen, any more than we of the laity will ever be able to prevent your being baked into brick—Why man you are as firmly bedded in this infernal quagmire of clay (I beg a thousand pardons gentlemen,) as ever was date tile in a chimney top—However, if some of these good men will lead in prayer, for I deem it improper to make the attempt without first attending to that duty—I will use my endeavors to release you." Jonathan, however, hardly saw the propriety of such a postponement, but bawled heartily for "present help." At last Hector and Bramble, after cutting off close to his head the singing master's principal pride and ornament, his enormous mass of hair, succeeded in drawing him out. The necessity of this "capillary abstraction," arose from the circumstance that Jonathan's eelskin had slipped from his hair during one of those gambols which his horse had recently seen fit to make; and upon Mr. Gillet's alighting in the mortar, his hair had become a more serious misfortune to him than awaited Absalom, the son of David.

However, to be short, for we are great admirers of brevity, Jonathan was extricated—remounted upon Spavin, and rode home quietly to *Piquag*.

Such an unremitted course of persecutions, as the confederates kept up upon poor Gillet, we are afraid will strike the reader as rather too wanton and merciless, and enlist a feeling in the singing master's favor: which we hereby caution the kind hearted peruser of this impartial history from indulging in, even for one moment; for Jonathan Gillet deserved every evil that befel him, as we trust will be made manifest in a very few paragraphs more.

An event occurred about this time which served very fully to develop the true character of Jonathan. Mr. Obadiah and Mistress Molly Bigelow, the venerable parents of our heroine, were both taken sick within a week of each other; the old lady died after a few days' illness, and her husband followed her in less than a month. Peggy was of course, too much affected by this melancholy bereavement, to continue her warfare upon her amatory tormenter; though she found at once upon the death of her parents, additional reasons for hating and despising him. Her infatuated father had given his whole estate to his daughter to be sure, as the law would have given it; but he had as appeared by the will on reading it after the funeral, inserted a condition making it imperative upon her to marry

Mr. Jonathan Gillet in a certain number of months after her father's decease; and *resting the whole property in said Gillet, upon her non compliance with this condition!* This important clause was an interlineation to be sure, but being in the hand writing of Mr. Gillet himself like all the rest of the instrument, no opposition was offered to the establishment of the will, and Jonathan Gillet, who of course, was appointed sole executor, proceeded at once to the execution of its provisions. He commenced the collection of all claims due the estate, and that too with the utmost rigor. Upon poor Bill Bramble he was peculiarly severe. That young man had given jointly with his mother a large bond to old Bigelow for a debt due him by Bramble's deceased father. This bond was put in suit, judgment obtained, most of the old widow's furniture "sold at the post" and young Bramble himself sent to Hartford jail as satisfaction for the balance; though his services were all his aged mother depended on for support. In short, Jonathan exercised his new functions with a high hand, and Peggy was even obliged to leave her father's house, to avoid the presence of the tyrannical executor; who now claimed entire control. These outrageous proceedings on the part of the singing master, aroused an increased spirit of revenge in her allies, and no pains were spared in vexing him with every species of persecution and mortification. His horse's tail was shaved while standing at the church door; ridiculous labels were pinned to him whenever he appeared in public, and he made a narrow escape upon a particular occasion, from the *ne plus ultra* of New England vengeance—a coat of tar and feathers, together with that most primitive and at the same time most inconvenient of all equestrian recreations, *a ride upon a rail*. An "Ordination" was held in a neighboring Congregation; an event which calls together the whole "beauty and fashion" of a New England community. Jonathan received the customary invitation to superintend the singers, *virtute officii*. He went of course; but brief and disastrous was Jonathan's share of the ceremonies. He had taken particular pains in furnishing forth his outward man in a manner suited to the conspicuous part he was to bear in the affairs of the day. Ned Pimp furnished himself with a couple of eggs, (we won't call them rotten eggs, because that would be vulgar, but they were eggs very much in the same state with those commonly in use at the pillory, and precisely like those thrown into the beard of Sir Hudibras—which that discreet Knight took to be "food chewed by some person with a foul breath!") These, Ned slipped into Jonathan's pockets. The singing master stalked to his station in the gallery in great majesty, and with the due importance took his seat among the singers, male and female. In setting down however, his eggs broke, and our hero became at once too *oderiferous* to render contiguity by any means endurable, and a general "edging off" immediately ensued. Pocket handkerchiefs were put in requisition all over the gallery, and in a few minutes there was scarcely an olfactory left undefended in the whole house. The choir of singers, whose proximity to our hero, rendered their case peculiarly distressing, decamped, man, woman and child, for fresh air. Jonathan soon learned the cause of the disaster, and sneaked

home in the utmost mortification and dismay. This was his last "public appearance," until the grand event of the history, which we are about to record; and which must and always will be looked upon as the most magnificent sequel that ever wound up an immortal biography.

Jonathan claimed a compliance with Peggy's original promise, as well as the condition of her father's will; and that the young lady worn out with his persecutions, consented to meet him on the following Thursday evening at an uncle's about ten miles off, where she would be married. Accordingly Jonathan again made great preparations for a display, and again expended large sums upon his wardrobe. He invited a large party to accompany him, and arrived early in the evening at the appointed place, with his invited guests—was ushered into a spacious room, and there found his intended, elegantly dressed, and really looking even more charming than he had ever seen her.

A large party of gay young people in their best apparel; together with the clergymen of the parish, were collected there. What struck him however, with some surprise, was the presence of Mr. William Bramble, who he had no doubt was in close confinement at Hartford. But he was so elated at the triumph which he was about to have, and so proud of his supposed bride, that he thought but little of it. In a very short time he hinted to Peggy his opinion that it was time to proceed to business, and for her to fulfil her promise. Upon this, Peggy's uncle turning very carelessly to Jonathan, told him, that as to the *business* of the evening, it was pretty much completed. 'The promise' says he which you speak of, my niece has already fulfilled; having just been married to Mr. William Bramble upon a promise made that young gentleman about three years since; and if I understand rightly her promise to you, it has been complied with also: that promise never having been extended any farther than to MARRY, if you would give her time. This she has done, and now Mr. Gillet allow me to introduce to your farther acquaintance, Mrs. Margaret Bramble, and this fine young fellow her husband, lately supposed to be in prison, but now at full liberty upon my bail! Jonathan muttered a good deal about foul play, and of the great things he would do upon the occasion; and finally told Peggy and her husband that they were welcome to each other, since he had got the estate; which was what he principally wanted. 'There' says the uncle, 'there's a small misapprehension also. We have ascertained within a few days that the clause upon which you claim, was introduced by yourself after the execution of the will; so that the estate not only belongs to Mr. Bramble, but the 'State's Attorney' has issued a warrant, requiring you to answer to a small charge of forgery; the inconveniences of which are only to be avoided by immediate escape—which course I recommend to your speedy adoption—and that not a moment may be lost, there Sir, is the door, which you will forthwith make use of, or I shall be under the necessity of quickening your motion by a cowskin. And as Mr. D. suited the action to the word, Jonathan found it judicious to retire. He left the house in the midst of a severe rain storm and was never afterwards seen or heard of in Connecticut.

ORIGINAL.

POOR OLD BACHELOR.

BY MRS. E. R. S.

MR. EDITOR—

The following letter I received lately, and send it, hoping you, or some of your fair readers may devise something to alleviate the writer's misfortunes. At least it might make a very pretty and moving ballad done into verse, and headed, "Pity the sorrows of a poor old Bachelor!"

"You asked me yesterday, my dear madam, why I never married—I made you no reply, except by a piteous look, and a deep sigh. You looked grave, begged my pardon, and no doubt imagined you had touched a string which awoke all the slumbering sorrows of my heart—and that thereby hung a tragic tale of woman's faithlessness, or of hopeless love. After due reflection, I have concluded to open my heart to you, and, after the approved method of all heroes relate the history of my life to you. Tears will no doubt spring forth, if not of compassion at least of mirth. I am at once, that most desolate of mankind, an *old bachelor*, and most pitiable of mortals, a *bashful man*. Bashfulness has ever sat upon me like an incubus, and destroyed all the happiness of my life. You have no doubt read the celebrated adventures of a bashful man, but I assure you my dear madam, his sufferings were trifling when compared to mine. I am cursed with one of those tender susceptible hearts, which can never look upon a sweet face without loving it, and from the time I left college have always been desperately in love with some one or other of my fair acquaintances and have each time pictured to myself the delights of domestic felicity, and have dreaded the very name of old bachelor.

I was a well looking young man, of good connexions and moderate fortune, and flattered myself I should not be always unsuccessful, yet bashfulness, cursed bashfulness has ever stepped between and marred my hopes.

You can have no idea of the unpleasant situations and awkward attitudes it has led me into. It really seemed to me at times as if some tricksey spirit had taken possession of me, and constrained me to act directly contrary to my preconceived ideas of gentlemanly and elegant conduct. In bowing out of a room, I invariably stumbled over a footstool, run my back on the sharp edge of a sideboard, and by my involuntary groan brought all the family around me, or if I escaped these I was sure to knock over the servant who was to let me out.

I never shall forget the ridiculous figure I made at Mrs. —, ten years have passed over, and yet I am as sensibly alive to the mortification, as if it were yesterday. I sat by the side of Ellen, with whom I was at that time deeply smitten, in the midst of a formal assemblage of her elegant relatives, when this same spirit of bashfulness took possession of me. I fidgeted in my seat, tumbled up my hair, until I looked for all the world like Mad Tom, and to complete the scene, I contrived to get both hands in my pockets, and both feet entangled

in the rounds of my chair, so that when I leaned forward it tipped, and down came I and the chair together in the midst of the circle, I on my knees and head and the chair on the top of me. I was extricated with difficulty by the laughing party. So thus ended this love affair, as I could never persuade myself to face Ellen and her sisters again. Soon after, a friend of mine, hearing I was going to Philadelphia, insisted on giving me a letter of introduction to some charming young ladies there, one of whom he said, would make just the wife in which I was in search. With a desperate effort, I made up my mind to face the strangers. I chose the soft hour of twilight, as I knew I should feel more confidence in the dusk, but on finding myself ushered into a room, full of ladies, the evil spirit took possession of me completely. I stammered, and blundered so much that it was some time before they understood my errand. At length I succeeded in presenting the letter to the lady who was pointed out to me as Miss B—. She begged me to be seated—I placed myself on the edge of the chair, lost the centre of gravity, sprawled and kicked about in the most elegant style, to the no small amusement of the ladies, and ended (not on the floor fortunately,) but in grasping for support the hand of Miss B—, which held the letter. In a few minutes I found myself after a furious run, at home, in my room, and the letter in my hand, and to this day, the ladies do not know from whom it came, nor who was the floundering bearer. My next adventure happened while staying at my aunt's who lives in the country. She had sent for me purposely to make myself agreeable to the rich and beautiful Miss H. who with some other ladies were staying with her. I admired Miss H. very much, and it was the dearest wish of my aunt to see us united. The sleighing was very fine at that time, and one day my evil genius put it into the ladies heads to propose a sleigh-ride to call at a neighboring house. As my aunt's sleigh had been broken, the coachman had fastened a sort of box on the runners, covered with buffalo skins, which was to contain myself and the three ladies. This latter arrangement I objected to, and insisted upon driving, as I never could summon courage to face three ladies at once. So, in spite of my aunt's almost angry remonstrances, I left the driver at home, took the reins, and like a booby-drove on, actually afraid to look behind me. When arrived at the house, I perceived all had come out on the piazza to meet us, and thinking for once to make a bold and dashing appearance, smacked my whip, drove rapidly up—stopped—looked behind—and to my dismay discovered that box, ladies and all had disappeared, and I had been driving the empty runners for, I do not know how long. I turned from the house and the wondering group at the door, and went in search of my lost fair ones. It seems, that in ascending a steep hill, the confounded box had loosened, and slid off so

rapidly, that when the ladies discovered their situation, I was too far ahead, and the noise of the bells drowned their voices. The snow was too deep for them to walk through, and there the disconsolates sat sometime, chilled through with the cold, their only amusement abusing me. To complete their mortification, a party of young gentlemen of their acquaintance soon after came up, and, not recognizing them at first, sat up a shout of laughter at their ridiculous situation. These gentlemen took them home, where I found them. Miss H——never could bear to hear my name mentioned afterwards. But oh, worse and worse! I never shall forget the party at Mrs. G——'s. It was what I always did detest, a small sociable party, composed of a stiff circle around the room. In the midst of this circle I found myself in that situation dreaded by all gentlemen, but particularly hateful to me, standing up before a lady endeavoring to extract conversation out of nothing. How I got there I cannot tell, but as soon as I discovered where I was, and saw so many fair faces turned towards me, in a listening attitude, all self-possession vanished, I grew redder and redder, and more confused—lost the thread of my discourse, and while vainly endeavoring to recover my scattered ideas, I espied, as I thought luckily, Miss G——'s glove lying at her feet. I snatched it up hastily, but found to my horror I had caught up the lady's foot. She was only saved from a complete sunset by the quickness of a lady next her. When I again summoned up courage to call on Miss G——, I was told by the grinning blackee, "Missees say she not at home." Thus one by one I lost all these fair creatures, and by degrees my relish for society. One evening however, I was persuaded to accept an invitation to a party given by the beautiful Miss D——, she resided in an old rambling country house near my aunt L—— at whose house I was then on a visit. The rooms in which the company were to be received, had been added to the rest of the house sometime before, and to enter them, it was necessary to descend three steps, a most detestable arrangement by the bye, and I wish her old Dutch ancestor who contrived it, had drowned himself and his bright imaginings in the Zuyder Zee. I had reasoned strongly with myself before I went—"What is there in the face of a woman that I should fear to look upon it? I am a man of fortune and figure, and ought to succeed in society. I will exert myself to throw off this *mauvaise honte*; I will be a man!" With these sentiments, I drove boldly up to the house, strode loftily through the hall, forgot the three steps, and came thundering down in the midst of the astonished guests. I turned my back and fled. From that time I have shunned the face of woman. Yes, woman! to whom I have always looked as the source of every blessing here below, I must fly from—she is that bright and particular star which I may not hope to obtain. Dear Madam, do you not pity me—is it not a cruel fate, that one feeling should render the world a desert to me, and force me to be what I always dreaded and hated, a dreary old bachelor. Tell me what I shall do. Take pity on my distressing case, and teach me some method to exercise this evil spirit which has usurped such dominion over,

Your doleful friend,

ANTHONY SOLUS.

PRESENCE OF MIND.

A FAMILY SCENE.

‘You had better close the book, Clara, for your thoughts are wandering,’ said Mrs. Canfield to her eldest daughter, a gentle girl about fourteen, who sat beside her, turning over the leaves of her book with a listless vacant air.

‘True, mother;’ she replied, laying it on the table, and, taking up her work in its stead, she continued, ‘I wish, if you are not particularly engaged, mother, you would explain something you said to father yesterday; an anecdote I have been reading on courage, reminded me of the conversation.’

‘Go on, dear, I am quite at leisure now.’

‘You said that want of self-possession, or what I call courage, was a great defect in any character, male or female. I thought, mother, to be wise, and good, made a perfect character.’

‘Wisdom and goodness are the principal, or chief requisites, the only foundation on which a perfect character can be formed; but they are not all that is requisite for its perfection: it is in

the mental, as in the physical world; many things beside beauty of shape and features are necessary to form a perfect model.'

'*I think*, mother, if my figure and my features were perfect, that I should be very beautiful.'

'Suppose your skin was covered with pimples, or sores, or one eye black, the other light grey?'

'That would indeed make a great deal of difference.'

'And I doubt whether we could justly call the person wise, who would allow themselves to be overcome with terror, when their very existence depended on their courage, and self-possession. Depend upon it, my dear Clara, the cause of weak nerves is often to be traced to an unrestrained indulgence of timidity and fear, which are seldom, very seldom caused by any weakness of organization. Some mothers have a foolish idea, that courage is altogether a masculine quality; that timidity is interesting and graceful—they love to see their girls shrink from the harmless spider, and scream at the buzzing horn-bug—none can wonder that the daughters of such mothers are timid and nervous.'

'Did you ever know any one so foolish, mother?'

'Oh yes, Clara,—more than one, or two. I have heard a mother say, with a look of perfect complacency, "My poor Eliza has such weak nerves, that the sight of a toad, a spider, or a mouse, almost unfits her for every thing—could you believe it, she was obliged to leave church last Sunday, her agitation was so great at the sight of a large spider, that crawled over her cheek, though her little brother took it in his hand and threw it away: she seems to have a natural antipathy to all such things: I am really afraid she will grow nervous—she is such a tender timid thing." I replied, that it was indeed a misfortune; but as she was constantly at home, the evil might be remedied *now*, as her nerves were not yet unstrung by her childish weakness and timidity. "Why as to that, Mrs. Canfield, I have my doubts whether there is any remedy for such things; it is her natural character; she was a very timid child always; frightened at the least noise she was unaccustomed to hear, and at the sight of almost every kind of reptile—and, to tell you the truth, I hate any thing *masculine* so much, that I had rather she would be a little nervous, than a great strong *man-woman*—standing unmoved, nor alarmed by anything—with nerves of iron, and strength to lift a barrel of cider." I made no reply, for I thought it would be

useless to argue with such prejudices; and I felt, too, that such influences acting on a mind of no uncommon powers would produce a weak nervous woman; that though she might be amiable, intelligent, and agreeable, very little enjoyment would be her's in any situation in which she could be placed; for the foolish indulgence of any weakness, will, in the course of time, make it a formidable fault; and that unfortunate daughter is now a weak, nervous, unhappy woman, with scarcely sufficient firmness to bear the common occurrences of life: her cheek is pale, her skin shrivelled, and her once lovely eyes have lost their lustre.'

'But, mother, she might have been born with weak nerves.'

Mrs. Canfield smiled, and replied: 'She might have been delicately formed, and very easily excited; though I think the most fragile and weak, *may*, by proper culture, acquire a mental strength and courage, they will find extremely useful as they journey through the difficult and often dangerous paths of life.'

'Do you think I am a coward, mother?'

'No, Clara, not a coward—yet you have not as much self-possession as I hope you will have a few years hence: you have no childish fears about insects and disagreeable objects; but could you assist in any surgical operation if it was necessary, though it was to be performed on one you loved?'

'I should not like to try my courage so far, mother.'

'I think your *courage* would be very little tried; it would only require a disposition to do what you felt to be a duty, with command enough over yourself to fit you for that duty. We are very seldom called to assist in any operation of pain, or danger to those we love; but the time may come to us all; and would it not show an unpardonable weakness, not to say cruelty, to let one suffer because we could not bear the sight of the instruments that would relieve them? I was grieved to hear you declare, you would not hold your sister's head for the world, to have her tooth out; for the sight of the instrument alone made you shudder. If the mere sight of that should be so dreadful to you, what must it be to her who was to bear the pain? you forget her feelings, certainly, or you would have said, 'Oh yes, I will hold her head, or do any thing in my power to assist in relieving her; for, with her friends round her, she will not suffer half so much.'

'But, mother, I don't think I could hold any one's head: in-

deed, mother, I should be so weak that I should be quite useless.'

'That is all conjecture, Clara, as you have never tried; and I feel sure if I should call upon you, and you should once exert yourself to overcome such weak fear, you would find it easy to do your duty ever after; it is only the *selfish* indulgence of your feelings, that unfits you for such trials. God has given us minds to conquer any slight difficulty or defect, even in our organization: some born with weak voices, and stammering tongues, have overcome and conquered both; some have even made squint eyes straight, by perseverance and attention. Do you think, then, that a fault (which in the beginning is so slight as to be considered merely an interesting weakness) might not be overcome by the same means?'

'I think it might,' replied Clara, 'if those who took care of them, would encourage and assist their efforts; but if they hear those they love and respect, speak of their timidity, as something to be praised and talked of, and they are called dear tender things, and petted and caressed, I think then, the girls are not much to blame: do you mother?'

'They are certainly not at all to blame while they are children; but if you, Clara, or any other girl of your age, will examine the motives of your actions, you will soon, by reflection, learn, that half your terrors are affected to excite sympathy: you would not perhaps be aware of it, until you learned to reflect deeply—which young people very rarely do, in time to prevent the formation of habits, that require great exertion and energy to overcome; but what girl of sense would be willing to encourage a weakness that must become a serious fault in time, when by resolution and exertion, she can overcome it?'

'But there are some people who almost go into convulsions at the sight of a spider—some who faint when it thunders, and others who have spasms at the sight of blood; such people are not to blame, mother.'

'No Clara, those are defects or weaknesses of organization for which we cannot account; but such cases do not occur so often as once in a million—and no one ought to believe their defects incurable, until they exert themselves to the utmost to overcome them.'

'Mr. Maxwell said, the last afternoon Ellen Raimond spent with us, that she was so interesting and graceful, even her timidity was quite captivating; though I thought myself that she

looked very childish, when she ran screaming to him for protection, from our pretty kitten, who gamboled round her and jumped on her foot, in pursuit of her ribbon which was untied and dragging after her,—she trembled and seemed very much alarmed, and her mother said, “Oh, my dear love, compose yourself, you know the little kitten can’t hurt you;” then turning to Mr. Maxwell she continued, “How my poor little trembler will get through the world I know not, for she is so timid and fragile.” She then told many anecdotes about her, and talked about it as something interesting, though Ellen, who was then quite composed, laughed and said, “Oh mother, don’t expose me.” I thought myself that Mr. Maxwell seemed pleased with her manner, and was half ashamed to let the kitten jump into my lap and play with my ribbon.’

‘*Very pretty girls, Clara, may do many foolish things without censure; such is the magic of beauty, that it often dazzles the eyes of the strongest, and more than that, hoodwinks the judgment, and paralyzes the reason.* Mr. Maxwell loved to see even the expression of terror on the face of beauty—and was still better pleased to soothe and calm her imaginary fears,—for though, without doubt, he supposed them all affectation, or the effect of improper management, still he was delighted with an opportunity to be useful and agreeable to one he loved to gaze on. But you must remember, my dear Clara, that youth and beauty are soon gone, and that such fears and delicate terrors, in the old and ugly, only excite ridicule and contempt.’

Clara was silent for some time, and then observed, ‘I hope, dear mother, you will continue to guard me from all such childish fears. I remember when I first came from grand-ma’s, I used to think I must begin to cry, as soon as I saw a black cloud arise; for grand-ma was so terrified at thunder, that I thought it was something dreadful;—but you did not talk to me, or try to break me of the habit, mother.’

‘I took another method, my dear; I knew it would be useless to attempt to reason you out of your foolish fears, so I took great pains to be with you, often leaving pleasant company and coming home, or wherever you was, though you was not aware of it.’

‘I recollect that you was always with me, and that I soon ceased to be afraid; but how, or why, I don’t know any thing about: how did you cure me, mother?’

‘At first, Clara, I endeavored to engage your attention in

something so interesting, you could not watch the clouds, and see the coming storm; and when the thunder rattled, I would say, "Never mind the noise dear; you see by my watch, which lies beside you, that the thunder-cloud is many miles off; and I am sure you are not like the foolish woman you read about in your school-book, who was afraid of the gun if there was no barrel on it;" then you would think a moment and look round on the calm quiet faces of your brothers and sisters, all employed; not one, even the youngest, trembling with terror; for fear only increases danger, generally placing us in the very situation we wish to avoid: thus by degrees you exercised your reason, reflected, and conquered your fears.'

'You were very kind, mother, to come to me always, even when you was enjoying yourself with your friends, merely to cure me of such childish weakness.'

'You know not, my dear child, how many such sacrifices parents constantly make for their children; often too, when the children themselves, even if they knew the cause, would think at the time it was quite foolish—but a good mother is always making a sacrifice of her time, and her own enjoyments.'

'I think now, I should rather be fearless and masculine, than timid and cowardly.'

'It is not necessary, my daughter, that you should run into any extremes—and to avoid Scylla fall into Charybdis:—gentleness, mildness, and sweetness, are indispensably requisite to the manners of a lady, and by no means incompatible with self-possession, courage and firmness; all of which, are most desirable qualities, and as necessary for one sex as the other.'

'Oh mother, you don't think a woman ought to have courage like a man?'

'When I speak of courage, I do not mean a reckless disregard of danger, boldness, or masculine energy; but that calmness and presence of mind, that sees danger without being subdued; that can, (though the ark on which they rest is sinking,) take the best measures for safety, while they look up with unshaken confidence to God for support and guidance: Our sex are often, very often, exposed to dangers of all kinds; alas! many are the lives lost by the want of these desirable qualities. My own eyes, and perhaps my life, was once saved by the exercise of those qualities I so strongly recommend.'

'Oh tell me how, mother, will you?'

'This evening, Clara, I will tell you, when we are all assem-

bled round the work-table, as your sisters would like to hear of my hair-breadth escape, as well as yourself. You had better take a walk now, Clara, the weather is so fine, and exercise in the open air is absolutely necessary for your health and strength.'

Clara with a young friend was soon rambling along a shady lane, engaged in conversation: they walked on without hearing the commotion behind them, until Clara turned and saw a number of boys following a dog, and crying out, 'Mad dog, mad dog.'—Remembering the lessons she had been taught by her mother, she sprang to the fence near, and, climbing upon the topmost bar, was out of all danger, while her terrified companion, who refused to follow her, run forward directly before the animal, until, exhausted by her exertion and fear, she sunk down on the earth faint and helpless. The poor dog was not mad, only weary and worried by the boys; and, glad of any protector or cover, he nestled down under the corner of her dress, to the real horror of the prostrate girl, who seemed almost in convulsions, until a laborer at work in a field near to where Clara stood, was persuaded by her to come and relieve her companion by driving off the dog, and assisting her to the bank. But poor Maria was so overcome with fright, that she could not stand, and could only say, 'Oh I am bit to death, oh I am bit, —it will kill me, it will kill me!' All Clara's attempts to soothe and calm her were vain, and she was obliged to go for aid, while the trembling girl sat sobbing on the bank, apparently unconscious of every thing but her own terror. Her father and brother came for her, and Clara returned home, forcibly struck with the truth of her mother's observations, by the effects of unnecessary fear and agitation on the mind of her friend, which she by one moment's self-possession entirely prevented—and while relating the events of the afternoon, expressed a wish that she might always be able to remember her mother's counsels; and again reminded her of the promise she had made in the morning. The children inquired about it, and when they learnt what it was, they gathered round the table; and when they said they were all ready, and begged her to begin the story, Mrs. Canfield told them she was quite willing to gratify their curiosity, though she had no story to tell, only an account of something which happened to her when she was but little older than Clara, which would show them all, if they reflected on what they heard, that courage and self-possession were very useful qualities.

After a few observations to them all on the importance of controlling their feelings and passions, Mrs. Canfield said, 'When I was about fifteen, a near neighbor, who had been ill some months, became a maniac, and no one was willing to watch with her alone. A Mrs. White, the intimate friend of the poor sufferer, and a very respectable elderly lady, called on me to sit up with Mrs. Alice, as I shall call her, for her real name is of no importance. At first I expressed some fear that she would fly at me; but on being informed she was fastened to the bed, and was no trouble, only no one liked to watch alone with her, I cheerfully consented. I knew nothing of crazy people, never having seen one in my life, and my heart sunk when I looked upon her cadaverous countenance, her deep black sunken eye, still flashing with unusual brightness—her long bony fingers, now grasping the bed-covers, and now pointing with unmeaning, though fierce looks, at all who approached her.

'I drew back, with a feeling of dread, behind the curtain which shaded her eyes from the light, for she seemed to view me with peculiar rage—muttering something about my aunt, against whom she had a strong prejudice; after gazing on me for some time, she burst into the most violent fit of passion, calling every body names, and yelling with indescribable fury. I looked at Mrs. White with alarm; she said, "Don't mind her noise, Lucy, she can do no harm, you know, tied fast to the bed; you had better sit down by the fire and read, for you have brought a book, I see." I seated myself by the fire, but reading was quite out of the question. I could not keep my eyes from the dreadful spectacle before me, and her cries rang through my ears, causing a sensation I cannot describe. When all was arranged for the night, and Miss Alice had drank her porridge, the family retired to rest. The sufferer, wearied with her paroxysm of rage, seemed inclined to doze: we seated ourselves quietly before the fire, conversing in low whispers, that we might not prevent her sleeping. But she exclaimed, "No muttering, no muttering—tell all your wickedness loud—sing it upon the house-top; I hear all your plots! I know that cunning one—she's a chip of the old block—don't I see her eyes staring at me, just like her aunt Polly's?—put *um* out, put *um* out, I say—stamp on *um*!" Mrs. White asked me what she meant by my aunt Polly, and if I had such an aunt. I told her I had an aunt Mary, who was one of the best and noblest of

human beings,—and who never could have injured her in any way ; though I had a faint recollection of hearing that Miss Alice had been displaced from some situation in their charitable society, to make room for my aunt, who was better qualified to fill it : this I presumed was the mortal offence, though my aunt was perfectly innocent, and knew nothing of the affair, until she was called to the office which she occupied ; but do you believe, said I, that she could remember so slight an offence through *years of sickness and suffering* ?

‘ Oh, crazy people,’ replied Mrs. White, ‘ remember every thing, no matter how far back, or how foolish.’ She went to the bedside to adjust the clothes and give her some drink, which she took, and after a time sunk into an unquiet slumber.

We increased the fire, drew our little stand close to the hearth, and both took a book. Mrs. White was soon asleep in her chair. Absorbed with my book, two or three hours passed unheeded. Miss Alice aroused us by calling for drink, and, taking the large basin herself, swallowed the whole contents. Mrs. White took a light to go into the kitchen for more ; but I begged her to let me go, as I did not like to be left alone with the maniac. She complied, only observing that it was a crooked way, and I might get into some bed-room. I went, however, determined not to stay alone with Miss Alice, if I could possibly avoid it ; but after going round and round, through short entries and long ones ; up one way and down another, I returned unsuccessful ; for it was an old-fashioned house, one addition after another having been added to it, as the family increased in numbers. I requested Mrs. White to remain until Miss Alice was asleep, when I should feel no unwillingness to be left alone in the room with her. She complied—and we were both pleased to see her soon appear in a sound sleep, the first she had enjoyed without groans and tossings. Mrs. White left the room with noiseless step, and I heard her moving about below, before I took up my book, in which I soon became absorbed, until I heard something snap or break, like a strong cord in the bed of the maniac ; before I had time even to imagine what it was, she had sprung upon the floor, and was standing before me such an image of horror, terror and dread, as I had never looked on or imagined, even in my wildest dreams ! She was laced up to the throat in a garment of red flannel—her arms, from which she had torn the covering, were long, bare and skinny ; her head, from which

every lock of hair had been shaved, resembled the bony skull of a skeleton. She stood on tip-toe, while the torn strips of her red dress dangled round her blue and fleshless ankles. I neither spoke nor stirred, until she pounced like a tiger upon the candle, which stood on the stand before me, and grasping it so tight that the tallow gushed through her fingers, she brandished it like a flambeaux in the air, saying, 'Those saucy eyes—those saucy eyes shall blear at me no more—I'll burn *um* out, yes, that I will; 'tis my turn now to look big and grand, Miss Polly!' And she gave such a fiendish laugh, that my blood curdled in my veins.'

'Oh mother, did she hurt you,' said Clara, earnestly. 'Dear mother, did she put out your eyes?' asked the children almost breathless, and pressing around her. She smiled, and replied, 'What an idle question—are not my eyes safe and sound in my head? If you had thought one instant, you would have been ashamed to ask it! But to go on: had I been incapable of thought, or when I was young indulged in childish terrors, I should either have fainted, or attempted to run; in either case she would, without doubt, have put out my eyes, for flight was impossible, as she was between me and the door, with four times the strength that I possessed, and she actually foamed at the mouth with rage and disappointment, when I snatched a blazing brand from the fire, and, holding it close to her, said, 'If you like fire, you shall have it; for if you come a step nearer I shall burn your hands off!'

For a moment she stood, her wild eyes glaring on me, her livid lips compressed, and the candle still brandished on high, while I, pale as a spectre, and trembling like an aspen leaf, still held the burning brand so near, that the whole stream of red light fell on her terrific countenance, and the sparks flew off on her face and arms; my own hands did not escape, though I was unconscious of any burns at the time, from the excitement and alarm of my own feelings. When Mrs. White's step was heard on the stairs, the maniac threw the blazing candle at me, and sprung into bed, where she covered herself entirely over with the bed-clothes, and began to sing. I, exhausted, and almost overcome, had just strength to throw my brand on the fire and sink into a chair, as Mrs. White entered the room.

But I never after watched with a crazy person.—You see, my dear children, that in this instance, self-possession certainly

preserved my eyes, if not my life ; and though you may never be placed in such a situation, still you will find many occasions when courage or *presence of mind*, are much required; and I hope you will endeavor to think, to pause, and reflect always, when anything occurs to disturb or alarm you.'

R. Isl.

L. L.

SCENES OF THE WILDERNESS.

BY MRS. JULIA L. DUMONT.

Is this a dream of the Poet? No! What is it to woman, that the tempest is darkening on the path of him she loves? Is it he alone who hath power to crush her spirit's strength. It is the breath of unkindness only, the unkindness of him, to whom her soul has clung in its deepest trust, that can wither beyond the power of earthly healing the energies of her nature. But a portion of him, and she, the gentle, and the feeble whom his slightest neglect would crush as with a heel of iron goes smilingly and gladly forth to be a sharer in the fury and the desolation of the storm. All other ties may be severed—penury, bereavement the world's scorn, all other agonies may be meted out to her in her cup of bitterness, and yet her heart, however delicately fashioned, hath not utterly lost its capability of sweet harmonies. They will still break forth at his touch, his whispered words of soothing will pass over the mangled and bleeding tendons of her soul, like the breath of spring healing the wounded vine, and all sufferings will be accounted as a price of nought for that tenderness which has bound up its wounds—mad and weak devotion! vain, all vain and unrequited. There is not in man's heart an answering tone to a sentiment of such terrible depth.

More than forty years ago, when the country which is now blossoming as the rose, was one vast, unredeemed, unmeasured wilderness—when its only paths were those upon which death and captivity were ambushed, not in their ordinary guise, but with claims dyed in blood, and terrors, mightier than the destroyer's self: even then, in a tent, which marked the encampment of the army, that was moving sternly on to a fearful doom through the gloomy depths of the interminable forest; there stood a form, fair and delicate as the frailest flower they had trampled in their onward course. A creature indeed of exceeding beauty—contrasting strangely with the lineament of a fierce soldiery, and ill assorted to the harsh features of a camp; yet in the passing loveliness of that fair face there was somewhat that told of blighted innocence—of glory gone by. It was but the twilight lingering of a brightness, clouded with sorrow and tarnished with guilt and shame.

Her eye was lifted imploringly to one upon whose high polished brow—though marked with intellect and even the impress of generous thought and feelings, there might be traced the strong workings of a spirit unused to other control than its own passionate and feverish impulses. His manner was cold and careless, and his countenance wore an expression of disgust and weariness, faintly combatted by some more kindly sentiment.

'Do not be unreasonable, Elvira' he said, with an air of suppressed impatience; 'the convoy will be ready to depart within the hour, and you must prepare to accompany them back to the Fort. It was folly that you left it at all; our path is hourly becoming more dangerous, and it would be a vile

profanation,' he continued with a forced smile, 'if those glossy ringlets should be added to the grim trophies that adorn an indian wigwam.'

'Alas!' replied the pale and drooping being he addressed, 'she who has nothing—Oh! nothing left but life, may well meet death without terror. Think you, Glenarville, I shall quail before the glittering eye of the Indian, when I have learned to meet the coldness of yours? and tell me, oh! tell me can the gleaming tomahawk effect a more fearful spoil on this faded form, than that which has been already wrought!'

The hitherto averted eye of the officer instinctively glanced over the agitated figure of the speaker. A gleam of remorse for one moment clouded its clear cold light, and he stood as one whose spirit had paused before some spectral shadow. Yes, for one brief moment visions of other and brighter years—of betrayed innocence—of injured trust, and despoiled loveliness, rose on the inward gaze of the haughty spoiler, and his proud bearing failed beneath their rebuking power. But it was only for a moment—the next he stood as proudly; and the chilling carelessness of his reply evinced how vain how worse than vain the task to rake the cold ashes of the soul. 'Nonsense! Elvira, when will you be wise enough to cease meddling with the past?—The present is only for us, and why bring forward the rubbish of yesterday to muddy the current of to-day? You have yet enough of beauty to secure many a gallant admirer. Go—return to the Fort, and if you choose, you may soon find means of returning home.'

'Home—home!' she wildly repeated, as she clasped her thin hands in frenzied agony; 'would you restore the trampled flower to its stem among the bright and stainless ones? Oh, no, no! you can but abandon it to the vile dust from which it is polluted; and add not Glenarville, oh, add not mockery to the ruin you may not retrieve.'

'Well, well, but you will at least be prevailed upon to relinquish the perils of this camp; with all your contempt of Death, you will find him but an imposing personage as he stalks in these forests. I have already spoken to the leader of the escort, and——'

'Hear me,' said Elvira, while the flush of excited feeling faded away, and her wrought features became suddenly calm, like lineaments settling in death—'hear me: and remember that he who hath flung from him the love of a once pure heart, hath also cast away the power by which he hath governed its purposes. I am content to bear no longer a part in thy thoughts, and no future upbraidings again remind thee, that I have ever been ought to thee but a thing of endurance; yet, till thou leavest these scenes of gloom and danger for the gay world where my name would tarnish thy laurels, thou seekest vainly to urge me from thy side.'

The warlike array moved on, and still the moon

beams that gleamed through the thick forest upon their mighty encampment, revealed the fair, pale brow, and delicate form of the frail one. But the doom of the Devoted was at last ready for fulfilment and the feverish slumbers, which remorse and sorrow robbed of their balmy influence, were broken in upon by the strange, wild shout of an encompassing host; fearfully deepened by a cry, in which the mortal agony of thousands were sent forth. Death had received his sickle, and the mighty harvest was begun. The grey light of breaking day was obscured by the smoke of battle, and the soft sweet sounds of waking life, which are wont to announce the early morning, had given place to the shout of conflict, the clash of arms, and the groans of the dying. The sunken eye of Elvira beamed with a troubled light, and she stood amid that scene of slaughter with an unnatural calmness. Her eye had sought her betrayer, and she beheld him stern and undismayed amid the thickest of the fight—another instance added to the strange and countless many of a spirit, bent and unfeebled beneath the guilty mastery of passion, still asserting its claims to a glorious nature, and proudly offering up a stained life upon the altar of virtue. The languid blood rushed with an exulting thrill through the frame of Elvira, as the voice of the dauntless Glenarville rose above the roar of the battle. His horse had fallen under him, shrieking out its life in a sound of unimaginable horror, but he had again risen in his strength, and again his sword was flashing in the morning sun-light. That fall had, however, brought Elvira to his side, and twice he warded from her white brow the tomahawk, that glittered over it. The conflict was of short duration. The red glories of the east had scarcely faded away, when a retreat was sounded through the thinned and falling ranks, and the survivors fled from a scene where resistance had become but madness. Not however in safety: the pursuit of the victors was now scattering death through the remote forest and the savage shout of triumph, and the shrieks of strong men, yielding up their souls in fierce and unnatural agony, were yet heard in the wide distance.

Night had fallen still and holy on the scene, and a deep quiet, as if the noise of strife had never profaned its sanctuary, settled on the depths of that far wilderness. Elvira was slowly recovering a long suspended consciousness, and one by one the events of that terrible morning, rose on her sickening sense. The dead—the piled up dead, were around her. The gorgeous banner, the waving plume, the gilded trappings, and all the splendid array which had flashed to the morning light, or floated on its breeze, were lying about her dabbled with blood, and trampled in the dust. In the deserted camp of those whose rest the sound of the trumpet might not again disturb, lay a dense mass of painted beings in the frightful pageantry of savage warfare; and at times as the fearful play of battle rose on the dream of the dark sleeper, a fitful sound of victory or defiance broke wildly and with startling discord on the silence of the scene. Elvira arose. The cloak of Glenarville, as she had fallen fainting and bleeding at his side, had shielded her from the scalping knife, and the night winds now came refreshing over her damp brow. Her wounds had been slight,

but the unseen ministering of sorrow had spared death a much sterner agency, and Elvira knew that the scroll of her destiny was completed. A strange extacy pervaded her soul—earth, with all its horrors had become but as a dream, passing away from her vision. She looked up through the giant branches that flung their shadows over that scene of blood to the clear blue heavens. The full moon and the quietly burning stars were moving serenely on in a brightness whose fount was eternal; and a portion of that glory seemed poured upon the darkened and polluted chambers of her soul. One only thought yet chained her upward flight—was Glenarville among the dead? Calmly and earnestly she bent over their ghastly heaps, but as yet they bore no lineaments, familiar to her gaze. She passed on to the extreme verge of the encampment, and a low groan now drew her to a form, that lay partly concealed by the thick underwood. She gazed for a moment on the features, which were slightly convulsed with death, and the next she had bent over them and was bathing the livid lip and brow with the waters of a near fountain.

‘Glenarville,’ she softly whispered, and the glazed eye at length opened upon her with a faint gleam of recognition.

‘Ha, Elvira! poor, injured Elvira—comest thou again to upbraid me with thy ruin? I had thought, but no, Elvira is dead, and it is well—there are no broken vows upon her soul—but for me the hour of her forgiveness is now past, and I may not die. There is a stern account in which I dare not enter.’

‘No, Glenarville, no—Elvira lives, but not to upbraid; she comes but to whisper peace, and then to die with you. The love that surveys its wrongs requires no expiation; it is of Him whose throne is beyond yon purple heavens, the dying penitent should seek forgiveness. Thither, oh Glenarville, direct your appeal. It shall not be in vain—My beloved hear me—am I not a sharer of your guilt; and already is the blessed seal of that high pardon on my soul, and the tempest of my heart is still. Yes, Glenarville,’ and the darkening eye of the fair comforter kindling with an unearthly and holy radiance, and her lip and cheek, which had already assumed the ashen hue of death, were again colored with a glowing tint—‘the brightness of another existence is gleaming on the darkness and desolation of my guilty path; and say, oh Glenarville, thou, who hast held with me the dreadful companionship of crime, is there not for thee also a share of that light?’

‘Pray for me, Elvira!—the voice of the *betrayed* may be heard—not of the *betrayer*.’

And the maiden knelt in prayer—she, the vile one from whose contaminating touch the daughters of innocence would have recoiled—and the earnest supplication went up through the deep stillness in accents of strong, passionate and holy trust. Sublime beyond human thought, and mysterious as the grave, is that influence through whose medium the scorned outcast of the earth obtains access to the Fountain of all purity, and holds high communion with Him whose face is veiled even to the righteous. She prayed for him: who had rendered her in the morning of life a scathed and blighted thing—stricken out from the fair pages of creation—and that prayer—so deep, so fervent, fell like dew on the

scorched soul of the dying. A smile of assurance gathered on his features, and as Elvira at last pressed her lips to his cold forehead, the tranquilized spirit passed without a struggle.

And there he lay, the haughty being who had moved on with a strange power, breaking the sinuous chords of early habit and kindred affection—dissolving as mist the pure creation of years of paternal solicitude, and trampling in his proud strength on the human heart as a thing of naught. He lay there, a form of dust. The spell which beauty had flung around it was forever broken, and the voice, whose blandishments had lulled the pure of mind into unhallowed slumber, was hushed in an eternal silence.

Season, years passed away, and again an army, whose final victory decided the conquest of those stained forests, was encamped on that scene of horror. The scattered dead were gathered for burial, and beside a tall frame, on the verge of the battle ground, there was found a slight skeleton, amid a thicket of underwood. The hands were yet clasped, as if in prayer, and the long sunny tresses that lay around the hollow temples, were still bound with the ornaments that had been worn in days of splended infamy and guilty pleasure.

SOME PASSAGES FROM THE DIARY OF AN EXQUISITE.

It was a pleasant afternoon in August. There had been a severe thunder-shower, but the thick black clouds had passed away, leaving unobscured the blue pavilion of the skies. The precious hour had arrived, when an irresistible penchant usually drives the 'lords of creation' to pay their devoirs at the shrine of 'Heaven's last, best gift to man.' I examined my wardrobe with the nicest care, as if the fate of my whole existence depended upon this one selection. I arrayed myself in a costly suit, which silently spoke the tailor's praise, and placed one of Young's admired hats triumphantly on my head, with a gentle and scarcely perceived inclination over my left eye. My collar I studiously bent down in the true Byronic style, displaying an exquisitely turned throat, which I thought might rival that of his Lordship himself—mounted a pair of false whiskers, enclosed my feet in unrivalled square-toed mirrors, frizzed my hair full thirty minutes, making my knotted and combined locks to part,

' And each particular hair to stand on end,
Like quills upon the fretful porcupine.'

Then was brought into requisition, a plenteous shower of eau de cologne and lavender. Till, at length, I stood forth with perfect sang froid, completely modernized, charmed with my own appearance. Thus accoutred, I sallied forth, just as the blazing sun was sinking behind the western hills.

The god of the golden bow and viewless dart had played some tricks of late with me, and my heart was in a particular state, with regard to a certain fair one. Onward I marched in a most delicious reverie. But, hold! what caused that sudden fluttering of the heart—that whirling of the brain? Certain it is the fair one had burst in all her charms on my enchanted vision. The bland, poetic hour—the romantic train of my reflections—the suddenness of the adventure—the beauty of the lady—all conspired to excite a tumult of emotion. But, quickly gathering up my scattered senses, now my good genius, ex-

claimed I mentally, now for your best bow, and sweetest expression of countenance. I was getting myself into the most graceful readiness, to tip my beaver in token of welcome and delighted recognition. The moment came—then, a la mode, the hand was raised to the head, the hand aiming to meet the bowing head. O, what a scene was that! Anathemas on my careless, blundering confusion. Bowing—most elegantly of course—instead of touching the rim of my capon cover as I intended, I awkwardly jambed my thumb into my left eye, which caused a sudden elevation of the head, not the most graceful; throwing my new hat into a villanous mud puddle, where I soon followed; for my feet being placed on a clayey foundation, made moist by the recent shower, slipped from their moorings, and splash went the said deponent into a bed of muddy softness. O, the horror of the moment! A maimed eye and soiled dress I could have endured, had I met with a sympathetic glance from the innocent cause of my disaster—but the smothered giggle of the fair one sent torture to my soul. I made my way through a back street to my home, secluded myself a couple of fortnights,—but all would not do.

When I appeared again in public, every acquaintance I met would raise his hand unconsciously to his hat with a sarcastic leer, giving me to understand, he knew well the tragic part I had acted. Even ladies saluted me with upraised hands, and arch and knowing looks. O, unendurable misfortune! I have broken my cologne bottle, (my quizzing glass I lost in the mud,) shaved off my whiskers, bid adieu to the friseur, thrown the card the lady once gave me into the fire, and now intend to be a sober inhabitant of earth for the residue of my life. I shall no longer aspire after a place in the fashionable world.

Be an ape again, will I? Humph!

R.

Story of a Humorist.

WELL, I have seen your friend, and find him to be exactly what you described him as being, a *Humorist*. He seems to have imparted much of that character to every thing around him. His servants are all admirably disciplined to second his whims, and his very furniture is, for the most part, adapted to the same purpose. 'This put me upon my guard; and there was hardly any thing in the room that I did not touch with apprehension. No trick, however, was practised upon me; and, as I found subsequently, I was indebted for such indulgence to one which was reserved for me at night, and which was such as perhaps all my English phlegm would not have enabled me to bear with patience. I escaped, however, being put to the proof, by the merest accident—the arrival of a poor Scotch surveyor, who was thought a fitter subject for the often repeated experiment. The Scotchman was treated with extreme hospitality; he was helped to every thing to excess; his glass was never allowed to stand full or empty one minute. The potations were suspended not until, and only while, the cloth was laying for supper, during and after which, they were resumed with renovated energy. Our entertainer was like the landlord described by Addison: the liquor seemed to have no other effect upon him than upon any other vessel in the house. It was not so with his Scotch guest, who was by this time much farther advanced upon the cruise of intoxication than *half seas over*. In this state he was conducted to his chamber—a fine lofty Gothic apartment, with a bedstead that seemed coeval with the building. I say *seemed*: for that was by no means the case, it being in reality a modern piece of structure. It was of dark mahogany, with its four posts extending completely to the ceiling of the chamber. The bed, however, was not more than about two feet from the floor, the better to enable the party to get into it. The Scotchman, with a good deal of assistance, was soon undressed, and had his body deposited in this place of repose. All the party then retired, wishing him a good night, and removing the candle for fear of accidents.

When the door was closed, I was for the first time made acquainted with the structure of the bedstead, which our host considered as his masterpiece. Upon the touching of a spring, outside the

door, the bed was so acted upon by a pulley, that it ascended slowly and smoothly through the four posts, until it came within two or three feet of the ceiling. The snoring of the Scotchman was the signal for touching the spring, and he was soon at the proper altitude. The servants required no instructions how to act. In one moment the house was in an uproar; cries of "fire! fire!" were heard in different directions. A pile of shavings was set in a blaze opposite the window where poor Sawney slept. The landlord's voice was continually heard, exclaiming, "Good heavens! save the poor Scotch gentleman, if possible; the flames have got into the room just under him!" At this moment we heard him fall, and bellow out. A sudden silence took place—every light was extinguished, and the whole house seemed to be buried in the most profound repose. The Scotchman's voice could alone be heard, roaring out, in the high dialect of his country, for assistance. At length, two of the men servants, in their shirts, entered the room, with a candle just lit, and yawning, as if immediately aroused from their first sleep. They found him sprawling on the floor. "O dear, sir, what is the matter with you?" "Matter!" says he; "why, isn't the house on fire?" "Not at all, sir." "What was the reason of the cries of fire, fire, then?" "Bless you, sir, you must have been dreaming; why, there's not so much as a mouse stirring, and his honor and the whole family have been asleep those three hours." The Scotchman now gave up all credit in the testimony of his own senses. "I must ha' been dreaming, indeed, and ha' hurt myself by falling out of the bed." "Hurt yourself, sir!—not much, I hope, the bed is so low;" and by this time it had been made to descend to its first level. The poor Scot was quite confused; quite ashamed at disturbing the family; begged a thousand pardons; accompanied the servants to the door; closed it after them, and was left once more in the dark.

But the last act of the pantomime was not yet performed. The spring had been immediately touched, upon closing the door, and the bed was soon beyond the reach of our guest. We could hear him groping about, and uttering frequent ejaculations of astonishment. He easily found the bedposts; but it was in vain he could endeavor to get in. He moved his hands up and down, His leg was often lifted by way of stepping in, but always encountered the floor upon its descent. He uttered exclamations of surprise not loud, but deep, for fear of again disturbing the family. He concluded himself to be in the possession of some evil spirit. In short, when it was found, by his silence, that he had given up the task as hopeless, and had disposed of himself upon one of the chairs, the bed was allowed to slide down again, and in the morning Sawney could not but express his astonishment at not being able to find it in the dark.

ORIGINAL.

S U P E R S T I T I O N .

BY H. H. RILEY.

It may be safely said that superstition is woven in the being of every mortal, with some it has a powerful sway—while its delicate shade is so elaborately cast over others as to be hardly perceptible. Why is it that something unearthly comes over us when visiting the sepulchral mansions of the dead; that a chill passes through us? It is superstition. The heavy stroke from the city dial at midnight, echoing along the blue and silent hills—the solemn rumbling of the rising thunder—the crinkling flash, in fact, all the phenomena of nature, strikes that cord of our bosoms; which only shakes by the effect of superstition. And why should this be so common a thing among the human family. It is thus. Those multifarious objects of nature—the ancient hills—the calm blue heavens—rivers that roll in silent glory, etc. etc. come over us with a strange power. They bear the impress of superiority. They point us to something nobler than man; and we know some invisible agency must be continually watching over them.

When we connect the idea of a higher power with our present sublunary state, those visions existing in another world, throws a gentle tinge of superstition over our minds in this. The angels are immortal, may they not come down to us?—Our friends after casting away the vesture of earth in the sepulchre, live only in spirit, may not *they*, too, come down to us?—Thus we reason with ourselves till we almost believe the sweet tale, which fancy colors and conjures up. Add to this the assertions which have been persisted in since time began, of mortals actually holding converse with immortals, and it is not surprising so many men of sound reasoning, hold a firm belief in the doctrines of superstition.

But I am vastly wandering. My object was to give a few of the prominent features of the popular tradition of Captain Kidd and his treasures, as heard related by a man of uncommon good sense, sterling integrity, and withal a very strict christian, showing the folly of mankind, when they exercise their minds in the world of spirits. I shall give it in his own simple idiom,

I well recollect the evening. It was in the depth of winter, and the wind whirled the snow around our windows. An old man of seventy, white as silver, formed a circle round the crackling fire. "Then," said he, "you don't believe in Captain Kidd, ha!" turning to an urchin, while he knocked the white ashes from his pipe.

The child looked up, but his grandfather appeared so stern, he dared not open his lips.

"It is a good many years since he was swung off, but his money lies as still as if it was buried beneath the bottom of the Atlantic," continued the venerable old man. "There is no getting at it. Mineral sticks charged with quicksilver, steel rods, nor any of these things won't reach it—it moves under ground. When Kidd was about to cover a spot, he

first called one of his sailors, and binding him by an oath to protect it, knocked him over, and pitched him on to it, and so both were buried together. Then the ground above it was smothered down in a peculiar way, when all taking hold of hands, mumbled over some gibberish, while they danced around it. No such a thing as getting the pot without repeating the same words to a letter; and those nobody, but Kidd and his men knew.

"I once recollect a friend and myself prepared ourselves to hoist a pot of the old robber's money. We had every thing ready, and started on our journey about ten in the evening. The pot was buried on a slope near the bank of the Hudson River, beneath a large oak tree. There was no doubt about it, for 'R. Kidd,' was inscribed on the tree. We arrived—the mineral stick gave us the exact spot—and the steel bar was run down to keep it from moving, when we heard it chink, on the pot. 'Now hold firm,' said I to my companion, 'while I dig.' I accordingly commenced with furious speed, and kept on until I had arrived half way down, when my friend complained the rod was *'hot'*, and was burning into the palms of his hand.' 'A moment longer,' cried I—'hold on for heaven's sake one minute longer.' But it was useless, he drew back his hand, and up went the rod twenty feet in the air striking a great distance from us. He showed me his hand, where I saw a place burned about the size of a six-penny-piece. After some searching, the rod was again found, and going back and putting it in the same hole as before, he ran it down full length—no pot was to be felt.

But we gave it not up. By the assistance of the mineral stick the pot was again found, about ten feet from the former spot. It being again secured by the rod, the digging commenced. All went well and I finally hit the chime. Just then my companion gave a scream and ran. On casting my eye upward, my blood chilled within me. It appeared as if a mill-stone hung above me, suspended by a thread—my eye traced the thread upwards, till lost in the air—I thought it could be no deception, and dropping all implements, ran for my life, nor scarcely looked behind me until I reached my home. On visiting the spot next morning, the hole was to be seen, but no pot—nor did I ever find it again. It had moved too far away."

There was a vast wonder passed around the circle when the old man concluded. Some proposed gloves when the rod was held, while the younger portion boasted of their courage, should they once strike on the chime of a pot of money. "They would'n't run for mill-stones, not they."

"Well," said the old man, "I have another story about Kidd, which you may think stranger still. But it is true—I saw it with my own eyes—no deception, all fair, open work. And he thus began—

"There was a beautiful road ran along the Hudson River near our residence. Upon one side it

was shaded by broad and lofty elms, while the river itself bounded the other. This spot was about a mile in length, and perfectly level. As a friend and myself were driving over it one morning with great speed, we heard a sudden click, and checking up the horse, saw at a distance something black lying in the road. On proceeding to it, it proved to be a piece of the top of a cast-iron pot. The thought struck us immediately, it might be a portion of Kidd's money, but there was no time to ascertain. The road was filled with travellers—so covering it over with some earth, we postponed the digging until midnight. Midnight came, but with it a broad, full moon. The night was almost as bright as day. Yet we concluded to try it; we proceeded to the spot with our implements and commenced operations. After laboring for near an hour, I turned my eyes toward the river—and *such* a sight as I saw there—I will tell you what it was. A large man-of-war lay close on us with her port-holes gaping towards us. The shrouds, round-top, cross-trees, and all the deck fore and aft below, were filled with men. They were clad in tight breeches of white, and buckskin, moccasins below, while a crimson frock, reaching down to the middle, and laced around with a strong leather belt, was seen above. Upon this belt were hung, various knives, and other steel weapons, that glittered in the moon-shine. Their caps were white, with a long black feather waving from the top. After looking a moment, we again commenced our labor. But what was my surprise when they discharged a full broad-side at us. It was then I thought of Kidd and his crew. But still I was resolved not to give out, and my companion and myself labored the harder. Several more guns were let off, and we could see the white smoke ascend up through the night air in wreaths—yet we did not seem to feel any effect from them. Then the ship would dart away like a flash without a single sail set—and what seemed strangest, at one time darted like lightning through a large island, and glided through the moonshine on the opposite side as if nothing had happened. Then it would be lost to the eye, but it was only for a moment,—it would, upon our turning, re-appear by our side.

Hurrying with all speed, we had by this time nearly hoisted the pot. But what was our surprise when, on turning to the vessel, we saw the crimson crew coming on shore in one long file. Among them we could perceive some bore a long pole and other's sticks. On coming nearer, these sticks proved to be crotched at one end. These were stuck in the earth at each side of the pot, and another short one laid across the crotches on the top. The *long* pole was then placed—one end resting on the stick from crotch to crotch, and the other on the ground fifty feet distant. Fifty men then stepped to the side of the road, where lay a large round stone, about ten times the size of those used in mills. Previous to this I had seen no such stone lying there. Knowing all this to be the work of Kidd's money, we labored the harder. Raising the stone they began rolling it up the long pole, right over our heads—some of the sailors walking up the pole. When it was directly above us, we could stand it no longer, but dropping spade and crow-bar, ran for our lives toward home. Next morning we visited the spot,

but no pot of money was to be seen—nothing but the hole we had dug. It had *moved* to another quarter of the earth."

These evidences of superstition will, to the mass of readers, appear childishly absurd. Yet, strange as they may appear, they were quite a matter of faith fifty years since. I repeat the notice, and I wish my readers to recollect the assertion, that the above evidences of Kidd and his crew dealing with Satan, in protecting his money, came from the lips of a venerable old man of seventy, who was distinguished for his sound judgment, veracity, and strict walk in the path of piety. This is the only reason they are adduced.

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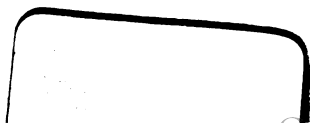


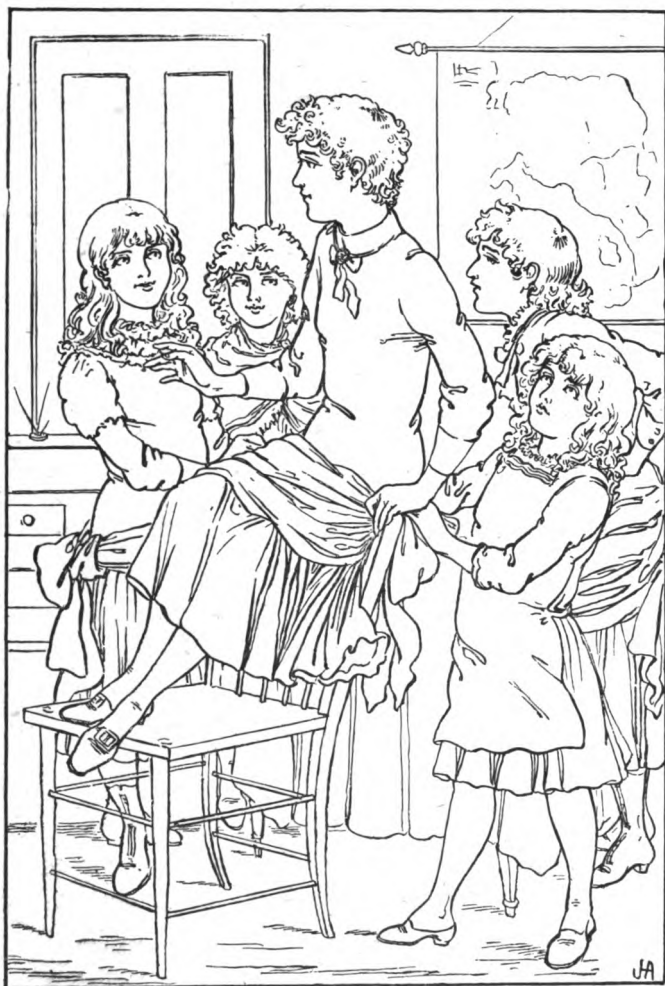


That aggravating school-girl

Grace Stebbing

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"Don't be frightened for me. I always sit on the backs of chairs."

—Page 9.

Frontispiece.

THAT AGGRAVATING SCHOOL-GIRL.

BY

GRACE STEBBING,

AUTHOR OF

"WHAT A MAN SOWETH," "ONLY A TRAMP," "HOW THEY DID,"
"WINNING AN EMPIRE," ETC.



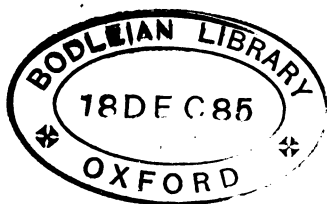
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That Aggravating School-Girl.



CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCES THE ANTAGONISTS.

It was towards the end of the Christmas holidays, and the Principal of Crofton House sat in her own private study, bending thoughtfully over two letters which had just arrived.

One of the letters was the recommendation of an English governess, whose age appeared from that letter to be the only thing against her. She was barely twenty-one, but she had great abilities highly developed, was skilful in teaching, a strict disciplinarian, and grave in her ways.

"And we must hope," murmured the Principal, as she decided to engage her, "that tact will make amends for youth, and self-control temper inexperienced strictness."

Unfortunately this hope proved vain.

"Guard yourself. Oh! my daughter, guard that temper of yours. In trying to conquer others strive to conquer yourself," murmured a mother lovingly, as she anxiously bid her daughter good-bye.

And, in reply to the earnest admonition, the new English governess for Crofton House gave her widowed mother a cold kiss, and with a cool "I daresay I shall do my duty," she too said good-bye, and set out for her new post.

The mother turned back into her home, praying, with hot tears, that it would please God to soften her child's stubborn heart, and to guide her into the paths of peace.

The other letter which on that winter's morning had called an extra shade of thoughtfulness into the Principal's pleasant, truthful-looking face was from the parents of an only child and proposed new pupil.

In writing of her the mother said: "Our Helen has been brought up so differently from most girls, that I fear she may appear to you in some respects almost eccentric. And I cannot deny that we have very greatly indulged her. She has been the queen in her own home, and is very high-spirited. But she is singularly gene-

rous-hearted and frank, and easily led by kindness. She is also the sunshine of her home, and I do think that even the well-known pleasant atmosphere of Crofton House would gain in brightness by her joyous merriment."

Crofton House was so noted for its high moral tone, for its girls' bright faces, brave bearing, and well-developed minds, that its gifted and highly esteemed Principal had never any trouble to fill vacancies, as Mrs. Edison well knew when she absolutely pleaded for her child's admission; and, even as it was, Miss Crofton hesitated some time before she answered the letter.

But she had seen and liked the parents; she had seen the bright, handsome girl herself; and the end of the matter was that she engaged the strict disciplinarian, and she accepted the high-spirited pupil.

The combination proved rather troublesome.

CHAPTER II.

THE NEW PUPIL.

“CLARA BOSWELL, Sybil Pinckney, and all of you, I bring you another companion,” said Miss Crofton, one rainy Wednesday afternoon at the beginning of February, as she threw open the door of the largest class-room and ushered in a tall slim girl of about fourteen.

The two eldest girls, who had been thus addressed by name, came forward, and with a few more words of mutual pleasant introduction, and with a nod and smile of encouragement to old pupils and new to make friends with each other, the Principal left the room, and for a few moments she seemed to have taken the general power of speech with her.

Thirty pairs of eyes looked at the stranger, and the stranger's one pair looked back at them with glances that greatly puzzled her new companions. None of them could decide whether

those glances were merry or grave. At last Miss Pinckney said in soft, half-shy tones—

“Will you tell us your name, please? Miss Crofton forgot to do so.”

The stranger's lips parted with a smile, and the expression of the bright, dark eyes was unmistakable now, as she came a step or two farther into the room, and answered with a quickness which startled her hearers, and at the same time banished their timidity:—

“I was just wondering who would speak first. My name is Helen Edison, otherwise called Topsy, in polite allusion to my head. I tried yesterday the effect of a whole pot of warranted prize-medal best bear's grease on it, but you see it hasn't made very much difference unfortunately; and mamma scouted my proposal to buy a smooth flaxen wig to make my first appearance in.”

“Did you really want to wear a wig?” asked a fair, golden-haired child, looking up with big wondering eyes at the olive, oval face before her. She added gravely, “I think your great heap of little black curls must be much prettier than a wig would be. Don't you?”

“No, indeed. I'd rather have the lankiest of long lank carrots. I tried the effect of some

thin slices of real carrots one day in a charade, and found the transformation in my appearance quite wonderful."

"I should think so," said roundabout, rosy-cheeked Milly Wilmot, with a laugh, in which most of the others joined.

"What a queer girl you must be!"

"Oh! very queer," was the calm, grave answer. "You'll soon see how queer when you've asked the regulation string of questions."

"The what!" exclaimed a chorus of voices.

"Why, the regulation string of questions, to be sure. I know exactly what they are. I've read about them ever so often. I'm a new girl, and you are all old girls, and so of course you begin by asking me, 'Is your father a chimney-sweep or ——'?"

"Oh! how can you!" in chorus from most of the wide-eyed listeners, while Clara Boswell looked indignant, and two or three exclaimed, laughing, "Oh! don't stop. Do go on. What do we ask next?"

"Well, let me think. Ah! to be sure. Next you ask me if I am older than I look, or if I look older than I am; and I answer, 'That depends upon individual opinion.' Then you naturally want to know whether my woollyish

black hair proves me a Hottentot or a Zulu ; and whether my father keeps a carriage ; and if my mother has a lady's-maid ; and if the doctor has ordered that I am to have extras for breakfast ; and whether I shall have a hamper once a month. There ! I can't remember anything more ; but I know there are lots of other things you want to know. Do ask me some of them, please. I am in one of my polite moods to-day ; to-morrow I may be quite different, and not at all nice to questioners ; so do please ask me what you like now."

"Well, in the first place," exclaimed Milly Wilmot, "do pray tell us where in the world you come from—from Robinson Crusoe's island, or where ? For you are quite different from the rest of us, I'm sure."

"Am I really ? Mamma said she was afraid I should be. But all the same, I had no such fortune as Crusoe," was the regretful answer ; "although I might have been 'Leila on the Island' over again ; for there was a great storm at sea seven years ago when we all came over from India."

"Oh dear, how funny !" murmured that golden-haired little Rosa Bell. "Then your father was an Indian, I suppose ?"

"A what!" cried the new pupil, her cheeks flushing hotly for a moment. The next instant common sense returned to her, and her face cleared as suddenly as it had clouded. Throwing her arms about the child, she danced with her round the room to the accompaniment of her own rippling peals of laughter.

"But what is the matter? What have I said?" asked Rosie. "You did say your father was an Indian, or a Zulu, didn't you?"

"Not exactly, you very small finisher. My father was a commissioner, if you know what that means; something rather high up, with a lot of hard work and looking after other people to do, and a great deal of anxiety; and now he is done with India for good and all, and he's a great deal older than mamma, and a good deal older than I am, and—but wait a minute. What capital balancing chairs you have here! I do like chairs that won't topple over the instant you try to sit on their backs. Now this," suiting her actions to her words, "is quite deliciously safe and comfortable."

Whether Miss Helen Edison looked really safe and comfortable was a matter, as she would herself have said, that depended upon individual opinion, but she certainly looked very contented

as she sat perched on the top back-rail of one of the heavy, old-fashioned chairs, with her feet patting up and down on the seat, and converting her throne into a see-saw. Once the chair tipped back over-far, and Rosa Bell caught at it hastily with her hands with a little cry of fear.

"Thanks," said the new pupil, calmly; "but pray don't be frightened for me. I always sit on the backs of chairs, and there's no fear for my neck, for I wear very stiff collars on purpose to guard it. But, while I think of it," turning to the others, "how comes this little mite of a long-curved thing amongst all us finishers?"

Rose answered for herself quickly.

"Because my papa and mamma are in India too. And Miss Crofton let me come here with my sister, so that I should not have to be somewhere all alone."

"Oh! I see. My sister and the world, and the rest all desert island. Where is this wonderful sister who is the only person who prevents your being all alone?"

"She is in the study learning her lessons. She's always learning lessons," with a little sigh; and Rose went off to join her, as the new pupil remarked—

"Dear me! What a pleasing contrast she

and I will make. When mamma introduced me to Miss Crofton just now, she said gently, "My Helen has good abilities, but a slight want of application! And you can't think how wonderfully true those last words were, at least about lessons. But I've tremendous application about some things."

"About learning how to sit on the backs of chairs, you mean, for instance?" asked Milly Wilmot.

"Just so. You see my father always wished I'd been a boy, so as I am fonder of him than of all the rest of the world put together, excepting mamma, I have done my best to please him in my manners and customs."

"And of course he has been pleased at having a sort of tomboy daughter?"

"Well—no—I can't say he has, unfortunately. But, then, as King Lear's daughters say, 'How hard it is to have a thankless pa'!"

"Fancy quoting Shakespeare!" exclaimed Milly. "I've never read a line of him."

"Fancy misquoting Shakespeare!" said a classical-faced companion, looking up from a volume of Tennyson's out of which she was learning the "May Queen" for her elocution lesson. Shaking her shapely little head at the

irreverence, she once more bent it over the poem, while the misquoter continued—

“But then, thinking of application, there is another thing. Did you ever, any of you, try how difficult it is to make yourself look absolutely stupid? It took me a whole week’s tremendously hard practice before I could do it. But I have succeeded at last. Application met with its full reward. Just see if you don’t think so?”

The new pupil had scarcely asked her question when there was a general start and exclamation. The transformation in the brilliant young face, a minute ago sparkling with intelligence, was marvellous.

The expression now was one of weak, pitiful helplessness; the lustre of life seemed to have faded away beyond recall, and the look in the eyes was strained and dreary as she turned them slowly from one to another, and muttered, “I don’t think the masters and governesses will expect very good lessons from me, will they?”

As she spoke, Clara Boswell, Sybil Pinckney, and two or three others turned and walked away. The rest greeted her questions with a suppressed titter, which continued and increased as the stranger, still maintaining her most dismal

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aspect, began to imitate the repetition of a lesson in a mumbling, uncertain tone.

“Augustus and Elizabeth were both great men—I mean, Augustus was a man, and—the population in the time of Elizabeth was Augustus—at least——”

And then, with an instantaneous change to an expression of most grave and sober sense, the incoherent repetition gave way to the following entreaty, uttered in a tone of quiet, pathetic reproach—

“Girls, girls, don’t giggle! It is so unlady-like. Whatever else you do, let me implore you not to giggle.”

For some seconds the giggling was worse than before, as the young Mentor shook her grave, curly head with an air of pitying sadness for her companions’ levity. But, piercing through the sounds of merriment, at length a hard, dry cough was heard approaching the room, and Clara Boswell flew back to the group gathered about the chair throne, exclaiming in a voice choked with strong emotion—

“Surely you are going to leave off this cruel nonsense now, and don’t mean to wound poor Josephine for the sake of a stranger we know nothing about?”

"If I am the stranger you mean," remarked Miss Helen Edison calmly, "I think you are most unfair after all I have given you in the way of personal information; and as for poor Josephine, whoever she may be, if her sense of the proprieties is so strong as to be wounded by hearing us laugh and seeing me sitting on the back of a chair, the sooner it is wounded the better, I decide."

"No, no, it's not that, though; it's not that. Clara is right, you will see. We ought not to have laughed," said Milly Wilmot quickly, in contrite tones and with flushed cheeks.

The new pupil looked round her, and saw that most of her companions' faces began to give more or less evidence of penitence or shame.

The next moment the door opened, and little blooming Rosa Bell reappeared hand in hand with a very tall, thin, almost white-haired girl of about seventeen. The pale careworn face and stooping shoulders gave the impression of a poor, half-starved seamstress just emerging from her close ill-lighted garret to carry home the needlework by which she earned her miserable food and shelter. The lustreless look which Helen Edison had conjured up for a few minutes' fun

was an abiding reality on the face of Rosa's sister.

Instinctively the air of merry defiance dropped away from the new pupil, and she slipped quickly and quietly down from her perch as the golden-haired child came forward with her companion.

CHAPTER III.

POOR JOSEPHINE.

“MISS EDDY——,” began Rosa, and stopped.

“I forget what you said your name was?”

“Helen Edison.”

“Oh yes. Then please, Miss Edison, this is Josephine; and she is the only one,” added the child, with a tone of affectionate pride, “who is allowed to sit in the study alone when she likes to work. She is the oldest of us all here.”

“Pray don’t remember that,” said the elder sister quickly, and for the first time raising her sorrowful-looking eyes. “Try to think that I am the youngest here, younger even than Rosie, and you won’t despise me so much. Rose says you are very clever, she expects, and I am stupid—so stupid.”

“Are you? Then I expect I shall find I like stupid people,” was the instant answer. “You look very kind. If I crack my head or cut my

fingers off, I'd rather come to you than to any one else here, I believe, to get mended."

An eager, startled look of wonder appeared suddenly in the school-girl's sad eyes, such a look as not even her companions of two or three years' standing had ever seen before. It seemed as though light had suddenly been shown to her where all had hitherto been dark. And it was even so. Pity she was accustomed to. Forbearance had been her portion from others ever since she came to school. This was the first time that any one had even hinted at the possibility of turning to her, under any circumstances whatever, for help or comfort. A new sun had suddenly flashed its light into her life. She might be of use instead of useless. Books were not the only path, after all, to esteem.

The new pupil's first half-hour at school had not been lost.

Ten minutes later Milly Wilmot drew her away with her to the farther end of the room, and whispered, "It was very kind of you to say that to poor Josephine about going to her if you hurt yourself, and you really must be clever to have thought of it. But, of course, you did not mean it?"

"It would not have been very kind of me to

say it if I didn't," retorted Helen Edison indignantly. "And I don't know what school-girls may do, as I have never been one before, but girls at home are taught not to tell stories."

"And so are girls at school," said Milly, in her turn half indignant, but she was of too light and careless a nature to take such a reproof much to heart, and, whatever faults she might have, she had at any rate the virtue of good temper, and very soon added—

"But you must confess that I had some reason for thinking you were not in earnest, when you said you would get Josephine Bell to do anything for you. You must be able to see with half an eye, even though you are a new girl, that she is quite right, poor thing, in saying she is awfully stupid. Indeed, stupid is hardly the word for it."

"No. Fear would be a much better one," was the quiet answer.

Milly Wilmot turned and stared at her companion. "What do you mean? If you suppose that Miss Crofton herself frightens her, or lets any one else be cruel, you are very much mistaken. And you have seen already how all the elder girls look out for her and take care of her. There isn't one of even the hardest of us

that does not pity her tremendously for being so wretchedly stupid."

"And between you, you have made her wretchedly afraid of your pity, and afraid of having always to be pitied. And just because she cannot learn a lot of lessons so quickly as most people! My father once said, when some friends were talking of people like that, that God had given a great many good gifts to men, and the least of them all, in his opinion, was the power to learn a great heap of lessons out of books."

"And what did he think was the greatest of them?"

"The grandest of them all, he said, was the power to see the best qualities of others."

There was a slight pause; and then, with a quick change of tone and expression, Miss Nellie gave her companion's arm a little pinch, and muttered, "To save you trouble, I may as well tell you that my prime virtue is a singular skill in mischief; and as yours, I am sure, is a laudable love of fun, I hope we shall be good friends."

Milly looked up with eager delight at the suggestion. As a rule, new girls had to wait to be chosen, but there was something about

this new girl, her handsome face with its keen bright eyes, her daring, her merry impudence, and her dignified self-assertion, that made it appear quite fitting that she should usurp the right of choice. Milly Wilmot felt that a distinction had been conferred upon her accordingly, and earnestly declared that, as far as she was concerned, she was sure they would henceforth be quite inseparable.

"We can walk together, you know, and learn together, and sit together," exclaimed Milly, rapidly enumerating the privileges and pleasures, according to her ideas, of a real school friendship. "And we can talk together, and——"

"And eat together out of one plate, like two cats," interrupted Helen Edison. "I hope I eat quickest. If I don't, I'll soon learn. I learn all those useful sorts of things very easily."

CHAPTER IV.

“TOPSY” AND THE JUNIOR GOVERNESS.

A YOUNG lady, small and neat in appearance, of a paleness and gravity that made her look two or three years older than she was, and with a mass of brown hair arranged in the very tightest and smoothest of bands. Such was Miss Rowe outwardly, and her deliberate, even-toned voice was in exact correspondence to her appearance, as she stood before Helen Edison, and with a slight bow said formally—

“I have the pleasure of seeing our new pupil, I believe? I am sorry that I have forgotten your name.”

“And yet,” said Helen in her clear, ringing voice, and with its very calmest tones, that well matched her questioner’s,—“and yet the one I go by is such a very easy one to remember if you have ever read ‘Uncle Tom’s Cabin!’ If you haven’t, I’ll——”

"Have not," interrupted the governess quietly, and with raised eyebrows.

"Oh yes, thank you. Of course. Only that takes so long to say, doesn't it? and I didn't—I mean did not and does not—like to keep you waiting."

There was a titter from the other end of the schoolroom, and a frown took the place of the flicker of a smile that for one instant had gleamed over Miss Rowe's face at the peculiar effect produced by the new pupil's self-corrections. She said more deliberately than before—

"You are very considerate; but perhaps you will show more regard for my time if you answer my question at once, instead of entering upon other matters."

Miss Edison's lower jaw dropped slightly and her eyelids drooped. A general air of timid dejection came over her as she repeated with hesitation—"Question—your question! About 'haven't,' was it?"

Some of the listeners in the distance were suddenly seized with very bad colds, and the English governess looked quickly round, and then back at the young stranger, who was nervously plucking at her fine India-worked

pocket-handkerchief, and looking the picture of half-idiotic misery.

Miss Rowe glared at her fiercely, and then mentally glared at herself for wasting fierceness upon such a worthless object. Her stock of respect and patience for clever girls was small enough; for stupid ones and ignorant ones she had an utter, overbearing contempt. Having anything to do with them wearied her unspeakably. She almost groaned as she said—"My question had nothing to do with your slipshod way of speaking. I asked you your name. I suppose you have not forgotten it?"

"Oh no," with an innocently infantile look of glee, "I have not forgotten that. It's so nice and short. It's Topsy."

"It is what?"

"Topsy. 'Specs I growed,' in 'Uncle Tom's Cabin,' you know. Papa says it suits me nicely. He always calls me that."

"Your father ought——" began Miss Rowe, and then she checked herself abruptly, and turned away from her new charge with a heavy heart and a frowning countenance. Fortunately the tea-bell rang, and Milly Wilmot flew back to her latest friend to show her the way to the dining-hall, and to murmur an astonished ques-

tion as to how she dared act in such a manner towards Miss Rowe. Helen Edison threw her arms round her waist, and having held her back until pupils and governesses had all streamed off, she broke into a peal of silvery laughter, and whirled her companion round the room in a mad waltz.

"My dears, the tea is ready," said a pleasant voice unexpectedly at the door, and in a tone of surprise. The dance came to an abrupt end, and, blushing deeply, Milly began—

"I beg your pardon, Miss Crofton, I——"

But the new pupil ran forward and broke in upon the apologies with a frank fearless—

"Oh, please, I hope you don't mind. But I am so glad to find that I am almost sure I shall like being here, and I generally dance when I am happy."

A gratified smile brightened the schoolmistress's face, and the mild tone of rebuke was exchanged for a cheerful, "Then I hope, my dear, that I shall very often see you dancing. But run away to the dining-hall now, for if you have as healthy an appetite as you should have, you will not feel much inclined to dance when the tea is waiting."

Milly Wilmot, at any rate, needed no second bidding, and with a sigh of relief she pulled

her companion quickly with her out of the class-room and along the wide corridor. Half-way down it Helen made a resolute stop, and began to look about her.

"What is it now? Do come on!" remonstrated Milly. "We really are very late, and Miss Rowe would think nothing of giving the signal to rise from the table before we had eaten even our first slice, or of drawing such general attention to us that we could not eat in any comfort. And I am so hungry."

"All right; so I am, too, so don't be afraid. I've been a match for that bugbear of yours once to-day, and I daresay I shall manage the matter again. Where did that door in the archway that I stopped at lead to?"

"Forbidden premises, I can tell you. It is the entrance to the governesses' own private sitting-room. But——" as she opened the door of the dining-hall, and looked quickly at the long table occupying its centre—"I pity you," in a whisper. "Miss Rowe has actually had the barbarity to keep you a place next her. It's too bad for the first night."

"Too bad! nonsense!" was the low, laughing answer. "I feel truly grateful for the honour done me."

"I only hope you may feel as grateful two minutes hence," was the equally low reply, as Milly hastily passed to her own chair, and left the new pupil to make her way alone to the head of the table, to the only seat still remaining unoccupied.

The French and German governesses had their places at either side, but as the senior English governess, owing to illness, had not yet returned from her Christmas holiday, Miss Rowe was the presiding genius, and took good care to make her presence felt. Milly Wilmot generally indulged in vigorous moanings over her own shortness, but on such occasions as the present she was far from envying Clara Boswell, poor Josephine, or the new pupil their height, and she slipped in between her two table companions with very unusual silence and want of commotion. Meantime Miss Nellie nodded a smiling return to Miss Rowe's peremptory invitation to come up beside her, and as she sat down she asked brightly—

"Do you like dancing, Miss Rowe? I do. We have been having a little dance just now, Miss Wilmot and I; it was such fun."

"Fun for which your companion will unfortunately have to pay a fine," was the slow-

spoken reply. "You escape because it is your first day here; but I have never before known a quite new pupil disobey the rules, or lead a companion into disgrace. You are a fresh and unpleasant experience for me, Miss Edison."

A pair of shining brown eyes were turned up to Miss Rowe's steel-grey ones with a wide-open, innocently surprised looking stare, and that specially clear, soft voice said with calm distinctness—

"I am very sorry, I am sure, ma'am. But what a funny school this must be. The very head of the school herself saw us dancing, and said she was quite pleased, and kept us to have a little talk, and now you tell us that we are to be fined for staying to listen to her. Is that always the way things go here?"

For a moment the junior English governess was nearly losing outward control, as well as inward command over her temper. She found those innocent-looking bright eyes and that musical voice most intensely exasperating, and she had to swallow down nearly a cupful of tea before she could steady her voice to say shortly—

"If Miss Crofton countenanced your want of punctuality, of course there is no more to be said. But even under such circumstances young

ladies, who have been educated as such, would have offered some apology for being late."

"Oh yes, of course. And so I meant to, really; only you see the thoughts of dancing put it out of my head for the minute. I do beg your pardon, but please may I have another piece of sugar in my tea? The doctor says that sugar is good for me."

"Did the doctor also say that chattering was good for you?" was the cold reply. But the new pupil was apparently not easily frozen. She greeted this question with a laughing—

"I don't fancy the doctor has ever thought to give any opinion on the subject. Though papa often says that he is sure it comes as natural to me as to a magpie."

"So I should think. But as we have not yet learned to be as fond of the sound of your voice as you seem to be yourself, you will oblige me by being silent for the next five minutes, and eating your bread-and-butter. I shall ring for leaving the table at the end of that time."

To show that she intended to keep her word, Miss Rowe detached her watch from the chain, and laid it beside her on the table. Miss Edison munched away quietly at her bread-and-butter with the calmness of a young lady who has the

whole evening before her for her meal. She finished her first piece of bread-and-butter just as the five minutes came to an end, and the governess laid her hand upon the top of the small table-bell standing amongst the tea things on the tray.

But there is many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip, and so there is sometimes a hindrance to the sounding of a bell, even though the hand be already on it. Before Miss Rowe could press down the brass knob she was startled into withdrawing her fingers by an eager, agitated exclamation—

“Please is the silence time up? May I speak now?”

“Have you anything worth saying?” was the angry reply. “What is the matter?” more anxiously, seeing the new pupil’s eyes fixed very intently upon herself. “Do you hear? what is the matter? Is there anything on me?”

“Yes. I have been watching it crawling up, only you said I must not speak, so I could not tell you. The nasty thing is on your shoulder now—near your——”

Miss Rowe’s one known moral weakness was a loathing for creepy-crawlies of any and every description, and consequently the old pupils were no more surprised than was the astute

young new one when the governess bounded up from her chair, almost shrieking—

"Near what? Where is it? What is it? Take it off, take it off!"

Every one jumped up, every one gathered round.

"Oh, it's a slug, it's a slug!" screamed one girl after another.

"Ah—h—h!" shrieked Miss Rowe, "then take it off, take it off, take it off!"

In her abject misery her voice for once descended from imperious command to entreaty. But the girls looked, and shivered, and gathered up their upper lips with sympathetic disgust and—did nothing. The new pupil calmly stretched forth her slender fingers at last.

"Stand still, please, a moment."

The governess managed to command herself sufficiently to obey, and in an instant she was free from her unwelcome ornament, and the slimy little insect was between Helen Edison's left thumb and finger.

"Thank you," said Miss Rowe, striving to speak with some degree of graciousness to her deliverer, who stood demurely eyeing her captive, and busily thinking the while. She looked up quickly when she was thanked.

"Oh, it is nothing to me, thank you. I don't mind them; but I should think that any of you who don't like slugs had better go out into the garden and shake yourselves. Where one has come there are generally more."

Tranquilly as that little piece of information was given, it was not so tranquilly received. There was a universal stampede, and in less than a quarter of a minute Miss Nellie, the slug, and—the bread-and-butter, were left alone. The slug was soon disposed of, and then the young lady seated herself comfortably, pocketed a good-sized piece of bread, took two slices of bread-and-butter on her plate, tilted back her chair, put her prettily-slippered little feet upon the ledge of another, and peacefully finished the meal that Miss Rowe had threatened to cut so short.

"Won't you have a little more tea now to finish with?" asked a timid voice. And, turning her head quickly round, Helen met the sad eyes of poor Josephine, and her own instantly softened.

"Have you been here all the time?" she asked wonderingly.

"Oh no! I ran out with all the others. But I don't think I am really afraid of things that cannot hurt, and I came back to ask you not to

kill the poor little creature, or, if you thought you must, to do it as quickly as you could."

"And were you satisfied with what I did?" asked Nellie, with a keen glance at her companion. She was evidently, for some reason or other, greatly contented when Josephine answered that she had returned too late to see the fate of the insect.

"You were only in time, then, to see me enjoying myself," said Nellie laughing; "and now that you have reminded me of it, I think that I really am thirsty enough to like a little more tea to finish up with."

"May I pour it out for you?"

"No, thank you. You might get scalded, or scolded, you know."

"But so may you, I am afraid, and I should like to spare you, if you will only let me."

Nellie looked at the wan, pale girl with a tender, beautiful light in the dark eyes that could be so brimful of mischief, and putting her arm round her as she stood beside her chair, she laid her head against her and said gratefully—"You may be quite certain that when I really want to be spared, or helped out of trouble, I will come to you. But just now I think I shall rather enjoy to see what a little scolding and

bother will be like. You must know I have never yet had any in my life, and I am quite hoping for some here by way of fun," said Helen, calmly, as she sweetened her tea very much indeed according to her own taste, drank it with much satisfaction, and then, before Josephine could stop her, gave four vigorous pressures to the bell, whose loud ting—ting—ting—ting seemed to ring out with something of defiance. At any rate Miss Rowe thought so, as the sounds met her ears even in the garden. She rushed in to discover what unauthorised fingers had had the audacity to touch that bell.

"The school shall be searched," she exclaimed, "to discover who has been guilty of such impertinence."

But no searching was required. Quietly seated in the dining-hall sat Miss Helen Edison, and when the breathless governess paused momentarily in the doorway, to master her wrath sufficiently to speak, Miss Nellie rose and came towards her with a sweet smile, saying meekly, as she slipped the piece of bread from her own pocket to Milly's—

"I suppose I did right to ring the bell? You were about to ring it, I know, when I disturbed you about the slug, so I thought you might like

me to attend to the matter, as it was forgotten through my fault."

A sound very like a snort was the only answer vouchsafed to this gently-spoken little speech, and then Miss Rowe turned round abruptly and went off to her own room. She left all further supervision for that night to her colleagues and Miss Crofton. The new pupil and the slug combined had been too much for her. Quiet and a night's rest were absolutely necessary to restore the young governess's shaken self-control. Something else might have helped her more effectually, but of that she had, as yet, no practical understanding. Her mother prayed for her, but she did not pray for herself.

CHAPTER V.

HER CHIEF ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

“YOUR education appears to me to have been hitherto most irregular, Miss Edison.”

“Most irregular,” assented Miss Edison, with a grave shake of her head. “Papa says it is only to be compared to a geological fault. Upheavals where you wouldn’t——”

“Wou——?”

“Ah, of course, I had forgotten again, but I know what you are going to say. Would not look for them, and depressions where they ought not to be expected. Perhaps you won’t mind my just telling you that when papa says that he always says ‘wouldn’t.’ I’ve noticed that particularly, whatever other changes he may make in the words.”

Miss Rowe looked sharply at the new pupil. Could she be daring to make fun of her? But no. That was impossible, and the young lady’s

face bore the innocently grave expression of a child really wishing to give a curious piece of information.

“You are dreadfully stupid in some things,” said the governess shortly; while the pupil with an absent air tied two loose knots in her pocket-handkerchief corners, inserted her slender white forefinger and thumb in them, “parson and clerk” fashion, and began solemnly bobbing them at each other, the more important thumb wagging its pointed turban in a most impressive and imperative manner at “poor me,” as Miss Helen murmuringly addressed her forefinger.

Helen Edison, the new pupil, was undergoing an examination by Miss Rowe as to her attainments, before having her place apportioned to her in the classes. In the ordinary course of events this examination would have been undertaken by the senior English governess, but, as has been already mentioned, that lady was absent through illness, and her energetic junior had to fulfil double duties, not only now but throughout nearly the whole of the term, with some help from the foreign governesses and the Principal herself.

It was so highly satisfactory to the young governess’s pride, and love of dominion, to be

thus paramount in the schoolrooms that she cared very little for the extra work and responsibility thrown on her shoulders, and, to do her justice, it must be confessed that during the three weeks that passed between the commencement of the Easter term and the advent of Miss Edison, the Principal had been more than satisfied both with her teaching and discipline. The generally mild sway at Crofton House easily tempered any little extra sternness.

But Miss Nellie made her appearance on the scene, and, as the complaisant doctor said to the patient who dismally announced that he ate well, and slept well, and felt well, "*Nous allons changer tout cela.*"

Even sensible, hopeful-tempered Miss Crofton herself had said to her sister-in-law the day before Helen Edison arrived, "Do you know I really feel almost frightened? Everything has been going on so smoothly."

And young Mrs. Crofton laughed more merrily than she had done for a long time. But if she could have seen a few weeks into the future she might have looked grave enough. Even if she could have been a spectator of that examination of the new pupil by the thin-lipped governess, her merriment would have been checked.

Whilst we have been giving these few words of explanation Miss Rowe has been bending over a small manuscript book, containing some notes she had jotted down as a guide to her in the present task. How the pupil was employing herself you know. Miss Rowe having at length decided on what branch of learning she would next question the enigmatical girl before her, began with thoughtful deliberation to raise her head. But it went up with a jerk as her eyes fell upon Helen Edison's knotted-up fingers, while at the same moment a sepulchral voice asked—

“Who married the king of the Cannibal Islands, and was she his first wife?”

“Dunno,” was the squeaked out answer.

“Then you'll be swallowed,” was the reply. And accordingly, by the help of the other three fingers, it was swallowed, just as the spectator of the tragic end of this little play in one act recovered presence of mind and breath to remark, in a tone of cold, withering sarcasm—

“It is a pity, Miss Edison, that I did not know an hour ago that you took pleasure in those kind of amusements. We might both have been spared the trouble of this examination, for I should presume that a share of Rosa

Bell's lessons would best suit your tastes and intellect."

"I am afraid not," said Helen, hastily pulling the knots of her handkerchief off her fingers, and putting the little mass of Indian cambric and embroidery into her pocket. "I don't think I should like to share Rosie's lessons, though they would be easy. I do so hate spelling and English grammar, you see."

"I see nothing," retorted Miss Rowe angrily, "but that you are very likely, I should say, to have to do very many things you hate while you are here, if you do not take care what you are about. You inferred a few minutes since that, ignorant as you are of much that at your age you ought to know, there are some studies in which you consider yourself proficient. Pray what are they?"

"Well, for one," said Helen, slowly thinking over her attainments—"for one there is French reading, and then, I think, history, and—but, oh!" with a sudden change to beaming animation, and speaking with a rapidity there was no checking, "Oh, you know all my cleverness in these is nothing, absolutely nothing, to my cleverness in whistling and playing cricket. Papa says no boy could be more perfect in the

rules, and that I can hit a ball as well as Grace himself, barring his strength."

"Doing what?" exclaimed Miss Rowe, managing at length to make her voice heard above the torrent of eager words. And at that moment the door opened, and the Principal came in to learn how the examination was progressing. She walked up to her new pupil, and passed her hand caressingly over the boyish-looking, curly head.

"What are you looking so bright about, my dear?" she asked kindly, but certainly with some surprise.

Miss Nellie's face flushed a little. "I was just telling Miss Rowe that papa says, with plenty of practice, I might make as good a cricketer as Dr. Grace, bar strength, and—and—" with a tiny mischievous quiver of the crimson lips, "I don't think she quite understands what 'bar strength' means."

Miss Crofton bit her own lips for a moment, and then broke into a laugh as she said, "No, missie, I don't suppose she does. Miss Rowe has not the fancy that you have for boys' pastimes, and she has been chiefly with girls all her life. But although she is not acquainted with boys' expressions, she knows a very great deal

more than I fear either she or I will ever be able to instil into this rough little head. I think I must take my turn now, at trying to find out whether there is anything at all in it already worth keeping there. If you please, Miss Rowe, will you kindly take the reading class in the garden room, and leave Miss Edison to me."

"Gladly," said the young governess, rising with a sigh of relief she did not care to stifle. She had not liked the new pupil when she first saw her yesterday, and she liked her still less now. There was, in fact, nothing in common between them but strong will, and a love of aggravating those with whom they were not friendly. And in the aggravation given she had certainly received the worst of it that morning.

Under the wise, gentle influence of Miss Crofton, Helen was like another girl. Instead of showing her poorest qualities, she began insensibly to display her best ones, and when Miss Crofton at length dismissed her they parted with mutual feelings of goodwill.

"She will be a very pleasant acquisition, I believe, my dear Miss Rowe; but she will require a little tact in dealing with her," said Miss Crofton an hour later. And Miss Rowe

drew back her head, and answered with a short laugh.

"I cannot say as to the tact, madam, but I should imagine she might try the far-famed patience of Job."

And then with a bow she went off to get ready for the morning walk, and Miss Crofton returned to her study with once more rather an anxious look on her face. Meantime Helen Edison was giving a lesson, instead of learning one. When the Principal ended the examination she delivered her over to the German governess, with instructions to sit and listen while the class was held. In an interval between explaining exercises and hearing repetitions, Fraulein Houpeland asked the demure young damsel beside her—

"And has you, perhaps, learnt already some leetle ding this morning, since you are here?"

"Oh yes, Fraulein!" was the instant answer. "I have learnt a whole heap of things. One of them, the nicest, is that Miss Crofton is a brick, a regular brick."

A good many eyes were raised rather suddenly from their books at this announcement, and Miss Wilmot whispered, "Oh, dear me, how

dare you ?” While Fraulein, opening her light-blue eyes to their roundest, exclaimed—

“She is a breeg! What is den das? My English goes not so far.”

“What a pity!” said Helen compassionately. “It is such a nice word, so expressive. Some people say ‘cheese’ for the same thing, but I don’t like it myself. But all *really* fashionable gentlemen say one or the other, so which would you prefer me to help you to remember? Shall it be cheese? I don’t like cheese, but if I did I expect I should call Miss Crofton a cheese, at——”

“Oh, you wouldn’t,” exclaimed Milly Wilmot. “At least, if you did, you would get banished to the attics, or, at any rate, sent to Coventry.”

“And you would have to join me in that delectable region for talking of it,” retorted Helen, and then she added, “Never mind her, please, Fraulein; but next time you get the sweetest, crustiest bit of a beautiful new brick loaf, just put heaps of fresh butter on it, and then, while you are eating it, only consider if you can think of any one you know in the world who is half as nice. I can’t, excepting papa and mamma, and now, perhaps, Miss Crofton.”

“And did you tell her to herself,” asked

Fraulein, now beginning to smile, "that she is a crusty, buttered breeg?"

"N—n—no, not buttered," stammered Helen Edison, vainly struggling for composure; and then, as Milly Wilmot exclaimed—

"Nor 'crusty,' I hope," she broke into a peal of wonderful laughter, that brought the tears into the eyes of the sensitive German.

"Ah! It is just so," she murmured, "that I have dreamt the fairies laugh as they dance in our German forests."

When the class was ended Fraulein kissed her new pupil, and sealed the commencement of a faithful friendship with a gift of chocolate.

CHAPTER VI.

THE "QUIET CORNER."

AT Crofton House the hours of preparation for the next day's classes were from five to six, and seven to eight, "and," as Milly Wilmot informed her new friend more expressively than elegantly—

"Any other little scimmagy bits of time you can catch at in between."

A few minutes before five Miss Rowe came to Helen with three books in her hands, and seating herself she proceeded to point out the morrow's lessons, adding—

"Although you have had nothing to do to-day but look about you, from the first thing to-morrow morning you will be expected to take your due part in the classes. And I advise you to choose out some quiet corner in which to prepare your tasks, for you seem to me more apt at learning to be unladylike than in acquiring useful information."

With that hard-spoken speech, which the

Principal would certainly have pronounced wanting both in tact and Job's patience, the English governess rose, without waiting for a reply, and left the pupil to her meditations.

They were not amiable.

Six hours ago Miss Crofton had told her new pupil that she half imagined she had suddenly got a rough-headed, mischievous laddie introduced into her quiet flock. But she had said so with such a tone and manner, above all, with such a feeling, that the rough-headed, mischievous maiden had laid her soft young cheek down on the schoolmistress's hand with an air of most sweet womanliness.

Now, an accusation was brought against the new pupil of being apt to be unladylike, and the tone and manner, above all, the feeling with which the accusation was uttered, were such that the girl, who prided herself on her boyish accomplishments, felt insulted, and sat meditating vengeance. It must be confessed that there was something very unboylike, unfortunately only too womanlike, in the touch of spite that had entered into her schemes of revenge.

A quarter of an hour of the first preparation time had passed before Helen Edison stirred after Miss Rowe left her, or raised her flash-

ing wrathful eyes. At length Milly Wilmot whispered to her with good-natured anxiety—

“You really had better begin to work. Even Miss Crofton gets angry if we don’t know our lessons, unless we are ill, or anything real of that sort comes in the way.”

“All right,” said Helen, raising her face then with a grim little smile on it. “I’ll know my lessons, never fear.”

And so saying she gathered the books in her arms and got up from the table.

“Where are you going?” asked Milly in a tone of disappointment.

“To find a quiet corner,” was the short answer, with the same uncanny smile.

And disregarding the beseeching looks that asked her to remain, she walked off to the other side of the room, and when Milly looked up again from her books, two minutes later, she had disappeared altogether.

“Did you tell your new friend that none of the girls of our class are allowed to work out of this study?” murmured pretty Rose Trew.

“Of course I did,” answered Miss Milly rather snappishly. “You know I did. You heard me yourself, but you always do ask such stupid questions, Rose.”

"Well, you need not bite my head off, if I do," said Rose tranquilly, "and I thought I might have misunderstood you as Miss Edison must have done, for I saw her leave the room with all her books in her hand just now."

"Doesn't follow that she misunderstood me," muttered Miss Wilmot sagely, and then, with a glance at the clock, she dropped her face into her hands and resolutely set herself to master some of those dreadful German rules, chiefly consisting of exceptions.

For some while a profoundly diligent silence reigned in the room. It was broken at last abruptly.

"Miss Edison, where are you?" suddenly exclaimed Miss Rowe. "Where is Miss Edison, young ladies? can any of you tell me?"

"She has left this study," said Rose Trew. "She went away some time ago."

"And where has she gone? Do you know?"

"To find a quiet corner, she said," answered Milly quickly, without lifting her face, and Miss Rowe was too far off to hear the accompanying giggle.

"I think she has carried her books to her room," said little Rosie, who had just come in

with her sister. "I met her in the south corridor before I went to Josephine."

The governess started up with a half-uttered angry exclamation. But the outward signs of her wrath were stifled almost as soon as visible, and her voice was icily cool and calm when she said, moving towards the door the while—

"As I am thankful to say that none of you have your new companion's weak-minded, low-bred liking for breaking rules, and proving yourselves unworthy of confidence, I trust that I may rely upon you to continue your studies in silence while I go in search of her."

A number of heads, moved with more or less of elegance according to the character of their owners, responded to this speech in the affirmative, and Miss Rowe departed. The door had no sooner fairly closed behind her than Milly Wilmot shut up her book with a bang, put her two elbows on the table, and said, defiantly—

"How dare she talk such rubbish! Low-bred, indeed! Why, she's the beauty of the school! She'd be glad enough if she was only half as pretty, I'll be bound."

"There were a good many 'shes' in that elegant speech of yours, I reckon," said Dorothy Jackson, flicking up her pen.

"I guess there may have been, Miss Yankee, and I calculate that you'll have to pay a fine for that large black kiss in your exercise-book."

Dolly looked down, and a dismal "Oh me!" followed her discovery of the great blot. The next five minutes were given up to the most delicate of painstaking efforts to remove all traces of it, for the devotion of any of her plentiful pocket-money to the payment of fines was Miss Dorothy Jackson's abhorrence. But, having thus easily routed one opponent, Milly had many other attacks upon her speech to answer, or to try to crush. As a specimen of her latter method of argument may be mentioned her retort of "Handsome is that handsome does," to Susan Wing's remark, that—

"I am slightly puzzled to see what her beauty has to do with proving she is not ill-bred, Mill?"

"Mill, but not Mill's logic," murmured an unfortunate companion, who was vainly trying to keep her thoughts on her tasks, and away from the conversation, and when Milly Wilmot exclaimed, triumphantly—

"Handsome is that handsome does," it was all up with the would-be student. She rushed into the fray. With a laugh she exclaimed—

"Why, Mill, what are you thinking of to use

that proverb now? Don't you see that it tells most absolutely against you? Miss Rowe says that Miss Edison's conduct is the very reverse of handsome, consequently, according to you, she is a——"

"A fright," said Dorothy Jackson sharply, still gazing at the doubtfully restored copy-book sheet.

"Just so, Dolly dear, especially as she has been the cause of your risking a fine," assented Milly sarcastically. And then she added, with a little yawn, "But, oh dear! I'm a great deal too hungry to go on arguing. I do hope they will be punctual with tea; they were five minutes late yesterday. I wonder whether Miss Rowe has found Miss Edison, and what she is doing to her!"

With that wonder she listlessly turned back to her lessons, to the great comfort of her logical companion; and we will satisfy our wonder by following the irritated governess to the south corridor, whither little Rosie's information led her to wend her steps. She stood upon scant ceremony when she reached the room shared by Miss Edison with Clara Boswell and Milly Wilmot. Opening the door abruptly, she exclaimed—

"Miss Edison, I must desire that you return to the study ins——"

She stopped short in her command. While

she had been speaking her eyes had made a rapid survey of the room, and had failed to discover any living audience but an impudent sparrow sitting on the window-sill, and uttering through the glass a shrill, "Keep, keep."

It may have been a piece of vain advice to its own poor little self to keep warm, but Miss Rowe took it unconsciously as an impertinent recommendation to keep her temper, and hastily shut the door in the face of the counsellor, with not even the gift of a crumb as reward that bitter cold evening.

Poor little bird: Poor young self-sufficient governess! We might add—Poor headstrong Nellie Edison! But, after all, it would be rather hard upon her to give her either pity or blame for not having tried to cure a fault of which hitherto she has been hardly conscious. Her great love for her parents, and the great love lavished upon her by them, and by her devoted old nurse, have combined to make life flow too smoothly to bring out the dormant self-will and passionate temper. Maybe it is well for Nell that not too late she is to be roughly roused, that betimes she is to awake to a knowledge of herself, and to know the stumbling-blocks that lie in her path heavenwards.

CHAPTER VII.

THAT SLUG AGAIN!

MISS ROWE, having left her truant pupil's bedroom, next sought her in the senior study, in the large class-room, the dining-hall, the music-room, the little study, the garden-room—that is to say, in every room on the ground floor, with the exception of the Principal's private study, into which no one was allowed to intrude during that hour, which Miss Crofton devoted to answering her numerous letters.

With every room entered, to no purpose, Miss Rowe's irritation increased. At last the thought came to her that, perhaps, the aggravating newcomer had been hiding under one of the beds when she looked into the room, and enjoying the sight of her annoyance. With this suspicion she remounted the stairs, and once more turned into the south corridor. As her eyes fell on the door of the governesses' private sitting-room she gave a slight sigh of envy as she thought of her

two companions, Mademoiselle l'Ermite and Fraulein Houpelande, sitting there enjoying a little leisurely interval of rest and tranquillity. When she passed she heard cheerful voices within, and it occurred to her that she might at least ask those favoured coadjutors to aid in the present search.

She turned back, and opened the door. Having made one step in she stood still, and put up her hand to her eyes for a moment, as though she imagined they had suddenly lost their power of correct sight. It may be confessed that she had some cause for her surprise.

There, before her, seated comfortably on the little sofa, side by side with the good-tempered little German governess, was the missing pupil, Miss Helen Edison. A small table, drawn up conveniently before them, was covered with the young lady's open lesson-books. She looked up as the door opened, and, acknowledging Miss Rowe's entrance with a smile, said, with calm cheerfulness—

"What a pleasant little room this is! I am so glad I thought of coming here. Kind Fraulein has helped me to understand and learn my lessons beautifully."

Miss Rowe came a step farther into the room.

"I am simply astounded, Fraulein Houpelande, to find that you abet a pupil—a new pupil, but I already begin to fear a most wilful one—in breaking the Principal's rules. I repeat, I am astounded!!"

Poor Fraulein trembled visibly before her junior but very much more strong-minded fellow-teacher, as she answered, almost humbly—

"Ah! Miss Rowe, but truly, with your pardon, I think not Miss Crofton would be displeased that for this one time I have given a couple words of help to this poor child so fresh from home. And, moreover, she came pleading you had yourself told to her to find a quiet corner for her studies."

Miss Rowe looked quickly at the pupil as these last words were uttered, and fancied she saw a smile flit over her face. The suspicion made her own accent still more biting as she replied—

"It is true I recommended her to move away from Miss Wilmot, as the temptation to keep up a chattering, tittering conversation with her appeared to be irresistible; but having also, not a minute before, told her that the next hour was to be devoted by her to learning lessons for to-morrow in the room she then occupied, I

should have imagined that even her intellect, neglected as she has been——”

Helen started up, almost flinging the table over as she came from behind it, exclaiming—

“I have not been neglected. You have no right to say that! If you are angry with me you have no right to——”

“My dear, my dear, what is the matter with you?” asked Miss Crofton in dismay, as she unexpectedly came into the room and saw Helen’s flaming cheeks and flashing eyes. She had feared that there might be some encounters between her two latest inmates, but she had certainly not looked for a desperate one thus early.

Miss Crofton had come up with a German letter she wished Fraulein to answer for her in time for the evening’s post, but she forgot all about post hours in the vexatious scene before her. She repeated her question—

“What is the matter with you, Miss Edison?”

Helen’s chest heaved as she answered in a choked voice—

“I don’t mind what people say of me, but papa and mamma—they shall not—— She says I have been neglected.”

“Why, my dear child,” said Miss Crofton, breaking into a smile, “I should never have

guessed from your countenance that you were given to making mountains out of molehills. We won't wait to ask just now who is spoken of in such an uncivil way as *she*; but whoever it may be has only quoted a sentence out of your own mamma's letter to me, in saying that you have been very much neglected. Your mamma repeated that sentence again yesterday to Miss Rowe also, so you see we cannot help all being aware of the fact. And now good-bye for the present. I see you have been encroaching on poor Fraulein's little spare time. She will be too good-natured ever to say you nay, missie, so I must trust the matter to your own generosity, and, unless you come to any great difficulties in your work, I am sure that you will try to remember it is my wish that you should never leave the study during preparation hours."

"I wish I could always have all my orders from you," answered Helen impulsively. "I will remember what you tell me." And then, with a defiant glance at Miss Rowe, she ran out of the room before the Principal could decide what to say to the complimentary but rebellious speech.

After tea Mademoiselle l'Ermite was on duty during the second preparation hour, and it was

Miss Rowe's turn to indulge in a little rest and solitude, on which no one was at all wishful to intrude.

The work downstairs proceeded with the tranquillity usual to it before the yesterday's advent of Miss Edison, until that young lady happened to have occasion to dive to the bottom of her pocket for a pencil. As she did so some recollection seemed to dawn upon her, and, hastily pulling forth the pencil, she began to fumble for something else.

Helen Edison's pocket was not at all what Miss Rowe would have called a young lady's pocket. She had a boy's habit of stuffing everything into it that would go in or that she wished to have "handy." Sometimes the things she desired to have handy were rather peculiar. The article she was hunting for now would come under that term, and yet she held it in considerable esteem. On the table between herself and Milly she deposited two handkerchiefs, two or three bits of string, a bootlace, a piece of the chocolate Fraulein had given her in the morning, and which Milly instantly popped into her mouth, a necktie, and various other articles, amongst them a big brown four-bladed penknife. But whatever else there was, it was

very evident that the special object she now sought was absent. When the pocket was quite empty she looked up at Milly Wilmot with a comical expression of dismay and disappointment.

"Oh, dear!" she sighed, "I *am* sorry. I have lost such a little treasure. I suppose I must have pulled it out of my pocket when we were out walking. I would much sooner have lost my pocket-handkerchief, or even this dear old knife."

"What was it, then? your purse, or a locket, or what?" asked Milly, with a mingling of sympathy and curiosity. "You might tell a body."

Her curiosity, if not her sympathy, was destined to be soon satisfied. Almost as she spoke she and all in the room were electrified by a piercing shriek overhead, accompanied by the sound of some small object thrown down. Whilst every one else started up with answering cries of terror and wonder, Helen Edison sprang to her feet with the delighted exclamation—

"Oh, I shouldn't be surprised if Miss Rowe has found my little treasure after all!"

And in her unexplained joy she once more seized her schoolfellow round the waist, and in the very middle of the grave preparation hour

whirled her up the room just as the door was flung open, and Miss Rowe rushed in, regardless of her usual cold dignity. Breathless, and trembling with excitement, she fell up against Helen before she saw her, and then with no wasted apologies she clasped her by the arm, and exclaimed—

“You wicked, spiteful girl! you did it on purpose! Go upstairs and find it at once, and bring it here that I may watch you, and see that you really do throw it away this time.”

“Throw what away, Miss Rowe?” asked Mademoiselle l’Ermite anxiously.

“The—the—ugh!” ended Miss Rowe, by way of an answer, with a strong shudder. “Miss Edison knows, and she deserves to have to sleep on them. A-a-a-a-h!!!”

“It would be a soft bed,” said that young lady calmly; “only I should pity the poor slugs.”

“Don’t be so — so — disgusting,” almost screamed Miss Rowe. “But go up to our room above, and hunt for it—the horrible thing—till you find it. It will be crawling away, and hiding somewhere, and I shall never feel at peace in the room.”

Helen smiled. “Poor little creature! Papa says he thinks them such wonderful things.

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And I assure you, though I don't know much of natural history, I am positive they can't bite."

"You deserve to be bitten, you tiresome little mademoiselle, if you are in the habit of keeping such pets," said Mademoiselle l'Ermite, with a smile, and coming forward in the interests of peace, while Milly whispered behind her school-fellow, with sudden fearful eagerness—

"Was it loose in your pocket?"

"Ah! By-the-bye, how did that piece of chocolate taste?" was the laughing reply.

"Gar-r-r," cried Milly, her upper lip shrinking into nothing, and she rushed out of the room.

Mademoiselle repeated aloud the question she had overheard, and shrugged her shoulders most expressively as she demanded—

"But then—no—it cannot be that you had a—a—limace—ah! loose in your pocket! Say then?"

"Oh no, mademoiselle. I guarded it most carefully in my little tortoise-shell bonbonnière. It was quite comfortable, I as——"

"You are a regular magpie," exclaimed Miss Rowe, interrupting her angrily. "Twice I have desired you to go upstairs and find the creature to throw it away. Now, I give you

the order a third time, and don't let me have to speak again. Go at once."

As she spoke she gave her pupil a little push towards the door, and Helen as quickly slipped aside, and moving away from the door altogether, ran across the room to the clock.

"I am very sorry," she said, as she reached it, "but I find it will be more than half an hour yet before I can oblige you by hunting for that slug. I promised Miss Crofton that I would not again leave this room during preparation time, and when I make a promise I keep it."

"Miss Crofton would absolve you from your promise under present circumstances," said Miss Rowe, with angry anxiety.

"Perhaps she would," was the irritating answer. "But she is not in to ask, for I saw her pass the windows just before you came down."

And then Miss Nellie sat down and folded her arms, and it was evident that nothing but bodily force would make her move.

Josephine Bell's weary eyes looked at her sorrowfully for a few moments, and then clasping her restless, nervous hands, the poor ignoramus rose and turned to the English governess—

"Would you please let me go to look for the slug for you?"

CHAPTER VIII.

STUPID, OR NOT STUPID ?

WHEN Josephine had entreated to be allowed to search for that dreadful slug Miss Rowe contemptuously replied—

“You! Of what use would you be, except to knock the ink over, or throw a table down? Why, you could not find your own book yesterday when it was right before you on the shelf.”

“That is true,” murmured Josephine humbly, and then a bell was rung, and one of the servants was sent up to look for that troublesome slug.

“And please do find me my dear little box, too,” added that irrepressible new pupil; “Miss Rowe has dropped it somewhere.”

“And bring it to me when you find it,” commanded Miss Rowe magisterially.

“Thank you,” said Nellie contentedly, “I shall be so much obliged to you if you will take care

of it for me, for it is almost sure to get broken or lost in my possession, now that it is empty."

To this speech Miss Rowe vouchsafed no notice whatever. She went off to watch the search, which, however, resulted in nothing but the finding of Helen's box. Whatever became of the slug, it was never again seen by any of the inmates of Crofton House. For many days Miss Rowe would not enter that sitting-room, and for many weeks whenever she sat there she had an uneasy sensation that a slug was endowed with breath strong enough for her to be sensibly conscious of feeling it on her neck, preparatory to the advent there of the creature itself.

I fear that it need scarcely be said that Miss Edison was delighted at the non-discovery of the insect's hiding-hole.

"If I felt any compunction before," she said to Josephine, "at having kept the thing to tease her with, I felt none, I can tell you, when I heard the answer she gave to your kind offer to help her. How could you be so—so stupid? I beg your pardon. I don't mean stupid in the way you call yourself so, but stupidly good to give her such a gentle reply?"

A faint flush overspread Josephine's pale face—

"Miss Rowe was quite right. I am dreadfully stupid at finding things. It was because she was so troubled I could not help wishing to help her. But it was foolish, I daresay, for me to offer. And if not," she added, in a low, gentle tone, "if not, you know, we who love our Lord have to remember that when we are reviled we revile not again."

Helen gazed at her companion for a few moments in silent amazement. Then she said shortly—

"Those are the sorts of things that I shall never remember."

CHAPTER IX.

TWO WAYS OF PUTTING IT.

HELEN EDISON had been a schoolgirl for two or three weeks, when one morning she and eleven of her companions were gathered together for their history class in the book-room. Josephine Bell was one of the number of the class, and Miss Rowe was to hold it. Helen had one of her touch-me-not looks on her face, as Milly Wilmot used to call them, when even that laughing piece of merriment herself did not care to be too free with her clever companion.

"Look out for breezes," muttered Milly to her next neighbour, as they sat awaiting the governess.

"I have just been thinking so," whispered back Rose Trew, following her companion's glance at Helen, who was sitting very erect, with folded arms, and the generally dancing eyes bent gravely on the carpet.

Helen Edison's first unfriendly impressions with regard to the young teacher had developed into an intense dislike, which was fully reciprocated, and the last two or three days a new element of discord had risen up between them in the shape of poor Josephine.

Miss Rowe had received instructions, like every one else about the place, to be very gentle and forbearing towards that eldest but most ignorant pupil, and accordingly she refrained from reproofs or punishments for the invariably imperfect or half-done lessons. But the short laugh, or few cool stinging words, with which she vented her biting contempt, were much more cruel than any open reprimands could have been, and generous-hearted Helen Edison had begun to feel them as keenly as the unfortunate girl at whom they were directed. A few days since she had taken upon her to prevent the sneers, to some degree, by hastily giving answers to questions addressed to Josephine, and no amount of angry prohibitions or fines on the part of Miss Rowe, nor grateful but tearful entreaties from Josephine, had yet prevailed to check her. This was the state of affairs, unknown to Miss Crofton, that Wednesday morning when Helen Edison sat looking her

haughtiest, and Miss Rowe entered the book-room and took her seat with her most resolute expression of countenance. No wonder that observant members of the class were able to prophesy that the following hour would not flow on altogether smoothly.

However, for some little time all went well. Josephine was, of course, at the bottom of the class, and when at length her turn came the question put to her happened to be one that she could answer. Miss Rowe raised her hands with mock admiration.

"Girls, girls," she exclaimed, "we must chalk it up! Miss Bell has actually given a correct reply,—an absolute fact, although almost past belief."

A little half-nervous laugh, from two or three pupils who stood greatly in awe of the stern, strict governess, greeted this speech, while a painful flush burnt in Josephine's usually pale cheeks. Helen Edison flung up her head, and her crimson lips parted suddenly; but, ere she could find cutting words to match her feelings, she caught so imploring a gaze from the poor victim that she changed her purpose, and shut her mouth more quickly than she had opened it.

"If you have anything on your mind you wish to say, pray say it, Miss Edison," said

Miss Rowe sarcastically. "It is a pity, you know you said last week, to be too prudent."

"I know it is a great pity to bother one's head with too much learning," answered Helen coolly; "and so, as we evidently shall not get through much above half our history lesson to-day before Professor Smith comes, I wish I hadn't studied it."

"If you would study your own language, and learn to speak it like a lady, it would be well," retorted the governess angrily. "You will have the goodness to write out the word 'hadn't' a thousand times this afternoon. Perhaps that will satisfy your fondness for the compound. Miss Wilmot! Attention, if you please. If I see you guilty of the vulgarity of whispering again I shall turn you out of the class. Now, Miss Trew. Did the death of Julius Cæsar prove the annihilation of the cause for which he died?"

Pretty Rose Trew always looked her prettiest, her companions said, when she looked a little troubled or perplexed. If that were the case, she must certainly have looked her very best just at that very moment as she looked up, startled, on being addressed, and began, by way of answer—

"Oh yes, of course—any one——" And then she broke off suddenly, stammering and confused, and said humbly—"Oh, please, I beg your pardon; but would you please repeat your question? I am very sorry, I did not quite hear it."

What she had heard was Milly Wilmot's triumphant whisper, "I told you there'd be a fuss this morning," and so Miss Rowe guessed; but, having inflicted two punishments already, she condescended to accept the apology, and repeat her question. Once more the lesson proceeded smoothly, and it really seemed as if the storm had blown over. Unhappily, in those days Emily Rowe's unsubdued spirit rejoiced rather than otherwise in storms. "Blessed are the peacemakers" were words without meaning to her. She would have complete supremacy or war; and as she questioned and taught the chapters of Roman History apportioned for the day's lesson her mind was at least half occupied with angry thoughts of her fearless pupil, and half-unconscious resolves to make her suffer through Josephine if she could not make her suffer through herself.

Once more the end of the class was reached. Once more it came to Josephine's turn to answer.

Or at any rate to be questioned, and not only keen-witted Helen, but even her dim-sighted *protégée*, read in the governess's curling upper lip and slight smile a determination to gratify herself at the expense of the poor ignoramus.

Helen tried to smile encouragement to her companion, but her smile had so much of sternness in it as only to prove an additional cause of trouble, and the girl's face paled visibly as Miss Rowe, after a few moments' thoughtful pause, said briskly, with a slight laugh—

“Now, Miss Bell, rouse up all your energies. It is once more your turn to distinguish yourself. Will you tell me some of the causes, direct and indirect, that led to the transformation of the Roman Republic into an Empire?”

Miss Rowe might as well have asked the girl to deliver a comprehensive lecture on botany, or the languages of the East, as she well knew; and nothing would have astounded her more than to find Josephine was capable of giving even the most shadowy outline of a correct answer. But nevertheless she fixed her eyes upon her with a calm, expectant gaze, beneath which poor half-taught Josephine shrank into dumb, stupid despair, and looked the semi-idiot the talented tormentor believed her.

The question asked admitted of no short, sharp, decisive response, such as Helen had lately flung forth for her schoolfellow's deliverance from misery. Even the clever, quick pupil herself must pause and think before giving a sensible reply to such a query, and Miss Rowe took advantage of the expected pause.

"What, Miss Bell!" she began in a bantering tone. "No answer at all? Dear me! this is sad, and when you began the lesson so brilliantly, too. But, do you know, I have just been thinking of something for your advantage, as the advertisements say. Are you attending to me?"

"Yes; oh yes," murmured Josephine, with quivering lips, and trembling in anticipation of what was to come. She distrusted the young teacher's tender mercies; so did her champion. But they were neither of them prepared for the fulness of the cruelly insulting blow which fell upon her.

"You are attending to me?" repeated Miss Rowe; "that is right. And I am glad to hear it, although you certainly look as if you were attending to nothing. But what I wish to say is that for the future you will oblige me, both for your own benefit and my comfort, by going

over all the lessons you have to prepare with the help of your little sister Rose."

She had scarcely uttered the last word when a gasping sob from Josephine for a moment drew all eyes towards her. But only for a moment; the next instant, amid a general murmur of, "Oh, how cruel!" before which even Miss Rowe half quailed, Helen Edison sprang forward, and with flashing eyes exclaimed at the top pitch of her ringing voice—

"You base, mean coward! My father would ask you if you are not *afraid* so meanly and despicably to stab one of your fellow-creatures. You coward!"

"How dare you speak to me so?" asked Miss Rowe, in a low voice of concentrated passion, also in her turn rising and springing forward.

"Dare!" echoed Helen, in accents of the supremest scorn. And at that moment the door opened, and Miss Crofton stood gazing in speechless amazement, and with a face marked by deep displeasure, at the scene before her. Josephine Bell, white and trembling, uttering dry, gasping sobs; the whole class in confusion; and the English governess and the new pupil, looking like two wild cats, confronting each other.

"What has happened? What is the meaning of all this commotion?"

"I must beg you, Miss Crofton, to permit me to be relieved of Miss Edison's attendance at my classes," began Miss Rowe, in a voice shaking with passion. "She has been most insufferably insulting."

"Not so insulting," retorted Helen fiercely, "as you have been to poor—to Miss Bell. Madam," turning to Miss Crofton, who was always thus addressed by her pupils, "she has just——"

"My child! whom do you mean by 'she'?" asked the Principal, in a grave, gentle tone, as she came forward and laid her hand on her excited pupil's shoulder.

A change came in Helen's expression at that tone and touch, and in a lowered voice she resumed—

"Miss Rowe has just given an order to Miss Bell to have her lessons taught her by little Rose. Is not——"

Miss Crofton started, and looked equally pained and shocked as she interrupted with the exclamation—

"Oh no; it is impossible. My dear Miss Rowe, you could not so have misconstrued my

request to you to think of every means in your power to aid Miss Bell's efforts at self-improvement? You could not have seriously given an order to an elder sister to put herself under the teaching of one so very many years younger than herself?"

"No, Miss Crofton, you are right. I could not, and did not," answered the young governess quietly.

And Milly Wilmot thought that she detected a triumphant gleam in the grey eyes from beneath the drooped lids. But Miss Rowe continued coolly—

"When I was a child my brother often got me to hear him repeat his Latin lessons, although I did not know a word of Latin; but I was quite able to tell him if he left out words or sentences. In like manner I believed that it might be a help to Miss Bell to have some one to repeat her lessons to, before bringing them into class. And," with a crushing glance at Helen, "any one of common sense would have concluded that Miss Bell would prefer employing her sister for this purpose, whose great love of being with her would prevent the office being one of drudgery, to any one else on whom she would have less claim."

Miss Rowe ceased, looked round at all the faces before her, and quietly sat down conqueror. She had so stated her case that even Josephine ceased her sobs, with a feeling that in letting them have vent she had given a greater proof than ever of her dull stupidity, and although Helen was fully conscious that the affair was now represented in a favourable aspect not rightly belonging to it, she still saw that she would have to confess herself to have been over violent, and hasty in taking up the cudgels. She did not wait for orders, but raising one of her hands and laying it on that of Miss Crofton's, still resting on her shoulder, as though to give herself strength for her task, she hastily but clearly apologized for the words she had used, then turned and pressed a swift kiss on the Principal's hand, and ran out of the room.

"She is a strange child," said the Principal thoughtfully, looking down absently at her hand.

"A very insolent and disagreeable one, I think," said the English teacher. "The sooner her spirit is brought under the better."

All the girls had gone off now to prepare for their next class, and the two ladies were alone. As the young imperious-tempered governess

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spoke a shade of anxiety and pity fell over Miss Crofton's face, and she stepped up to her, and laid the hand which had rested on the pupil's shoulder on the teacher's. Miss Rowe moved under it rather impatiently, but the Principal kept it there, saying gently—

“Nay, my dear, you must not mind. Remember, I am old enough to be your mother, and—forgive me if, in all earnest friendship, I say that all of us need pray that our own spirits may be brought under the influence of God's Holy Spirit of love and peaceableness. For us teachers it is of the deepest importance that we should remember this. Our Lord says to us, as He said to St. Peter, ‘If you love me, feed my lambs.’ Our work in the world is of the very noblest if it be performed in the right spirit—that is, the spirit of love.”

And then the earnest, true-hearted, Christian Principal of Crofton Hall withdrew her hand, and sought her own room to spend five minutes in prayer for all those committed to her charge, and for herself that she might have a right judgment in all things, and be guided to speak the word in season.

Miss Rowe took advantage of her departure to mutter to herself, with scornful indignation,

“The idea of preaching to me!” and, thus scattering to the winds the good seed sought to be planted in her heart, she provided herself with a volume of Dante’s “*Il Purgatorio*,” and spent the next leisure hour in thorough enjoyment of the dreary pictures drawn by that masterly and sardonic hand. She also would have written an “*Il Purgatorio*” had she the genius, and would have delineated a good many people she knew in very unpleasant positions.

CHAPTER X.

THERE ARE CATS, AND CATS.

HELEN embellished her exercise book with a drawing of a cat dragging itself stealthily along, with its body close to the ground, towards a wounded dove, vainly trying to flutter upwards with a broken wing.

"One slight mistake in this sum, Miss Edison," said the old Professor, with a smile bent on the book just handed up to him. "One slight mistake, but really I must forgive it on account of the very clever sketch below. May I ask if it is a copy?"

"No, sir," said Helen demurely; "it is only a memory of something I saw this morning."

"Dear me! Then I hope you saved the dove?"

"I think I startled the cat a little," replied Helen, with a curious light in her eyes. "But I got rather a nasty scratch myself in doing it."



“One slight mistake,” said the old Professor. — Page 78.

"Dear me, dear me! did you really?" said the Professor. "I hope, then, that you have had it seen to."

"Oh! thank you, I haven't troubled about it, sir; it's all right again. And please," she added hurriedly, as the door opened and the Principal entered, "please will you let me see now if I can discover my mistake in that sum?"

She held out her hand eagerly, but the fussy little elderly gentleman was not to be so hushed up. He liked his clever, heedless, handsome young pupil, and instead of attending to her request he called out—

"If you please, Miss Crofton, I have just learnt that one of your young ladies has had a scratch this morning from a savage cat, and has neglected it. I assure you it should be attended to without delay. The scratch of a fierce cat is sometimes as poisonous as a mad dog's bite."

"Yes indeed, Professor, so I have heard," replied the Principal in anxious tones, as she came quickly forward and made her way to the pupil indicated, who was looking unusually confused.

"Miss Edison, my dear, you should have told me of your hurt," said Miss Crofton reproachfully. "You know, my dear, how strict my

rule is that I should know of all such matters instantly, however trivial they may at first sight appear. Let me see your scratch now at once, please."

"I can't, madam," said Helen, with flushed cheeks. "It's—it's—internal."

"It is what?" shouted the gentleman, startled out of his usual professorial dignity by the extraordinary information. "Good gracious! how can the cat's scratch be internal?"

Helen glanced up at him as he stood fluffing up his iron-grey hair, and gazing at her as if she were some newly-discovered fossil, and then she suddenly ducked her head down, and was seized with a violent fit of choking.

"Miss Edison!" said Miss Crofton sternly, and with a sudden expression of comprehension on her face. "Compose yourself, Miss Edison; you are interrupting the class. You need not be alarmed for her, Professor; the scratch has not broken the skin."

"Ah, I see!" said Professor Smith, relaxing into a smile. "In that case, if she feels any hurt at all it is indeed internal. But our young lady was more frightened than harmed, I should say."

"You are certainly right, Professor," assented

the Principal, as she moved away to her seat, and the lesson proceeded, while Milly Wilmot muttered in her friend's ear—

“I guess it was your internal feelings that got the scratch, ma'am.”

“What a genius!” muttered back Helen. “Are you not afraid to be so clever? They say geniuses are short-lived.”

Before Professor Smith's class was over Miss Crofton was called away to little Rose, who had somehow managed to tumble down the stone steps into the garden, and had bruised her leg, hurt her arm, and got a terribly big bump on her forehead, rapidly turning to all the colours of the rainbow.

Neither Josephine nor any of her companions knew why the Principal had been summoned out of the room, and to one, at least, of the number it was a great relief.

The door had scarcely closed when Helen Edison raised her eyes from her book on geology, with which they were now occupied—

“If you please, sir, that creature was a two-legged cat.”

“What! what! what!” exclaimed Professor Smith, astounded, and pushing his spectacles above his bushy eyebrows. “Really, Miss

Edison, you must pardon my saying that you are the most singular pupil it has ever been my lot to instruct. On what grounds, pray, do you found your belief that the ichthyosaurus was a two-legged cat? The most careful and profound research proves it to have been of the lizard tribe, and to have been possessed of the full compliment of six legs. It was utterly unlike a cat in every particular."

"Then," said Miss Helen reflectively, "it is equally certain that the long-named thing was also utterly unlike a good many human beings."

"No doubt," assented the Professor.

"But," said Helen, "I don't care to have you think that I was more frightened than hurt this morning, as you said half an hour ago, so I wish, please, just to tell you that the cat that scratched me was a human cat, and it scratched my pride and dignity badly, and they are both smarting still."

"Internally! ah, to be sure, internally!" exclaimed the old Professor, and he broke into a sudden burst of laughter, which greatly astonished most of his pupils. It appeared equally to astonish himself, and also to frighten him, for he checked his merriment as suddenly as he had given way to it, and with a hasty, almost

humble, "I beg your pardon, young ladies," hurriedly resumed his geological lecture with an air of even greater solemnity than that with which he usually honoured his lady pupils.

Miss Helen Edison had relieved her mind, and during the following quarter of an hour proved a most exemplary student.

CHAPTER XI.

“ PLEASE GIVE ME A REWARD.”

It was a rule at Crofton House that the twenty minutes before the dinner hour should be relaxation time. The girls might spend that little space exactly as they pleased, even in doing absolutely nothing, if they so chose. But there was one privilege especially attached to those twenty minutes which had as much as anything to do with the happy atmosphere usually prevailing in the establishment.

From ten minutes past one until the half-hour the Principal was always quietly seated in her arm-chair in her own study—in the winter beside the fire, in the summer beside the window leading through the wide French glass doors into the garden. And thither any one of the inmates of her home was welcome to come, from the senior English governess, the next in authority to herself in the house, down to the shock-headed

little lad who weeded the gravel-paths and cleaned the boots.

Any one who was in trouble, perplexity, difficulty, or even disgrace, might claim a hearing from the chief during those invaluable twenty minutes. If two happened to come together, it was established that the younger, and presumably the weaker, had first attention. But, as a rule, the wheels of the establishment ran so smoothly that very frequently for weeks together Miss Crofton would have her twenty minutes as a little quiet breathing interval for herself. The privilege had been made more use of since Miss Edison's arrival than the schoolmistress ever remembered to have been the case during a similar period, since its first establishment the year after she set up her school.

To tell the truth, Miss Nellie very much enjoyed a quiet chat with Miss Crofton, for whom her liking was as great as her dislike for Miss Rowe, and she seized every excuse to plead admission during the holiday minutes to the sanctum. Then Miss Rowe had several times claimed an audience to complain of her headstrong pupil, and once Milly Wilmot's rosy, round face had made its appearance, all tear-stained and piteous, to beg off a punishment

which she had incurred through following the mischievous Nellie's leadership. Altogether the patient, hard-worked Principal had begun to resign herself to the expectation of daily visitors, and was accordingly the less disappointed when, soon after she had left little Rose quietly sleeping away some of the effects of her tumble, a tap came to the study door, and was followed by the appearance of Helen Edison's curly dark head. The eyes beneath the curls were not quite so brave as usual in their glances, and the two little, slim, white hands hung down in front with a copy-book between them.

"Come in," said the Principal. But her voice was very quiet, even stern, in its gravity. Miss Crofton was having a good deal of trouble with this wilful, indulged, only child, and the half-understood matter of the pretended scratch and interruption of one of the masters' classes had much annoyed her. She was not disposed to meet her pupil's interruption of her quietude with her usual genial greetings and friendly welcome. However, Helen did not expect smiles just then, so she was not disappointed. She obeyed the "Come in" meekly, and as the schoolmistress looked at the girl's fine expressive earnest face she began to grant a pardon before it was asked.

"I am very sorry I vexed you, madam, by laughing in the class to-day," began Helen demurely ; "but—but—he did look so—funny." And then that mischievous crimson mouth began to unbend and quiver into laughter again—that laughter which nearly every one found themselves so utterly unable to withstand.

Miss Crofton made a vigorous effort at self-control as she said—

"My dear child, you had no right to excite Professor Smith into agitation. You had no right at all, as you well know, to allude to any matters whilst with him outside such as were connected with your studies. How you came to forget yourself so far I cannot understand."

"It was owing to that," replied Helen, opening the book she had brought with her at the cat and dove drawing. Like the Professor, Miss Crofton was for a few moments lost in admiration of the unsuspected genius displayed in the spirited little sketch, whose meaning she read too clearly to need explanation. At last Helen said quietly—

"I made the sketch in my book without thinking, and then I could not tear it out because of the sums, and when the Professor asked me about it I could not say, 'The cat is Miss

Rowe,' could I? I did tell him after you had gone out of the room that it was a two-legged cat. I could not do more, I thought."

"I should think not," said Miss Crofton, with a half laugh, which she could not wholly stifle. "I should think not, indeed, as regards saying for whom you meant the cat. But, my dear child, do you not know that your sketch is a proof of a great want of charity? You make Miss Rowe's life far harder for her than it need be. Teaching is very trying and wearying work under any circumstances. But for Miss Rowe it is harder than it would be for many. She has a high, impatient temper, like yourself, which she needs to be perpetually curbing in dealing with even her most docile pupils, and this in itself is very tiring; but you expect her never to be irritable, never to be hasty, never to be severe, never to look for obedience from you unless she will spend time and care in almost suing for it. This is very unjust of you and discourteous. It is also much against your parents' intention in placing you here. If your father were in this room at this moment he would tell you that one of the highest duties any one can learn is to learn to obey."

"I do obey you," said Helen, in a low tone.

"Yes," said Miss Crofton gently, "that is very true. But, my child, why do you obey me? Is it for the sake of obedience, or is it because I have been so happy as to win your love?"

"Because I love you," was the instant answer; but the handsome young face looked thoughtful too, and hopefully yielding.

The schoolmistress drew her to her side as she continued kindly—

"And for the future you will continue to obey me because you love me, and you will yield obedience where obedience is due to others for duty's sake, even perhaps a little also to spare me the vexation of having to listen to complaints about you? I can even give you another reason, that I think will help to make your submission to Miss Rowe more easy."

"What?" eagerly. "That she will be going away soon?"

"No, indeed," answered the Principal, rather taken aback. "Certainly not, unless you worry her so that she is obliged to go. I was about to tell you that she has a widowed mother and young brother greatly dependent on her exertions, and you will be truly guilty of great cruelty if you so trouble her that she cannot

remain here, or that I should find I cannot keep her. Do you understand?"

"Ye—es," said Miss Nellie slowly. Matters had taken a wholly unexpected attitude to her. After a silence of some minutes or more she said at length, but unconsciously with the air of a gracious little queen—"Yes, then. I will put up with her for the sake of the little brother, and to please you, as much as ever I can for the future. I will really; and to reward me for that beforehand you will please say yes to what I am going to ask you, won't you?"

For answer Miss Crofton gave free vent to her laughter this time, as she exclaimed—

"Well, truly, you are a little Miss Impudence to come asking rewards for doing, or rather, for the present only promising to do, what you deserve punishment for not doing!"

Nevertheless, Helen Edison's petition was granted, for it was a generous request to be allowed four times a week to give up her scanty leisure in order to help poor Josephine with her lessons.

CHAPTER XII.

A MOONLIGHT EXCURSION.

"MILLY, tell me quick, how much do you weigh?"

There was such eagerness and anxiety in Helen Edison's tones as she asked the question that Milly Wilmot started up in her bed in affright, and exclaimed—

"Seven stone nine when I was weighed last holidays in the hay scales ; but oh ! what's the matter ? Am I too heavy ? Is the floor giving ?"

"It's not you that are too heavy, but I that am too light," was the quick answer. "My body does not weigh enough for my spirits to-night. Do jump out of bed, please, and hold my feet down, for my spirits are getting lighter every moment, and I am quite dreading to feel my head bumping against the ceiling."

Thus exhorted, Milly did spring out of bed and run to her friend with a face full of alarm,

which was visible enough even in the moonlight. She had heard of people being seized with fevers in which they talked strange nonsense, and she certainly thought that her favourite schoolfellow was seized with one of these fevers now. And the worst of it was that Clara Boswell, the sensible senior, was away on a two days' visit to some relations just returned from a foreign residence.

With the exception of the inmates of that room, the whole of Crofton House was wrapped in silence and slumber, for the hour was one o'clock A.M. The night was beautifully calm and bright, and, for March, very mild. Milly had been asleep for three hours when she was disturbed by the shaking of her bed to see her companion, wrapped in her crimson cashmere dressing-gown, standing in the middle of the moonlit floor, and giving little springs up and down, which set the whole room vibrating. Then came the startling question.

Milly was trembling as she took hold of her friend's hands instead of her feet, and implored anxiously—

“Do stand still! do get into bed again! Then you know you can't go up to the ceiling.”

“Unless I went up flat, pancake fashion, you

know. No, I really can't risk that, I might happen to knock my funny bone."

And with that remark Miss Helen Edison freed her hands from her companion's grasp, put them on to her shoulders, or rather, to be quite correct, clasped them both over one shoulder, and turned her into a sort of leaping-pole, flinging herself lightly backwards and forwards, while she hummed—"Baa, baa, black sheep, have you any wool?" to the end of that charming ditty.

"Sing too, Milly, do sing too," she said encouragingly. "I'll let you have my shoulder now, if you like."

"I wi—wi—wish that you'd get into—bed," jerked out Milly, shivering with fear and chilliness. "I can't think what is the matter with you to-night."

"Can't you?" laughed Helen, as she waltzed off to her schoolfellow's bedside, caught up a blue flannel dressing-gown, and waltzed back again.

"Put that on," she commanded, at the same time helping obedience to the command, and then adding—"Did you ever see a bottle of soda-water, and did you ever see it opened?"

"Yes, often," answered Milly, a little reas-

sured as to her friend's sanity by the fetching of the dressing-gown. "I've seen lots of bottles, and seen them opened too; but what has that to do with you? Have you had a bottle of soda-water to-night?"

"Ugh! No, indeed, and don't wish; it's the horridest stuff I think I ever tasted. But what I want you to know is that I am the bottle of water——"

"Wh—what!" shrieked Milly Wilmot, starting back, and instinctively seizing up the nearest chair, and holding it as a barrier between herself and the evidently very-much-up self-declared soda-water.

"Ah: that's no good now," said Miss Nellie, with a long ripple of low, silvery laughter. "I went off long ago. I'm the soda-water, Clara Boswell is the cork and the wire. They have taken her away, and I have come out—POP!"

And with the "POP" she bounded clear up on to the barrier chair, as Milly dropped it and tumbled backwards, put one foot swiftly and lightly on the top of the back, and, with a second bound, came neatly down into the middle of Milly's bed.

"How nice!" she ejaculated, with a contented sigh. "Your bed is springier than mine, Milly.

I wonder whether Miss Crofton would mind our changing. You see you are so much heavier than I am that I don't suppose springiness is of much account to you. Besides, I've noticed that when you go to bed you generally like to lie still."

"I should have liked to lie still to-night," groaned a doleful voice from the midst of a huddled-up mass of blue flannel on the floor. "If you are going to keep dancing on my bed may I have yours?"

"Certainly, ma'am, with the greatest pleasure in life. But at the same time I may as well inform you that I am not going to dance indoors much longer, on your bed or elsewhere, for the present. I am going out for a walk, or rather for a climb, I have long wished for, and I am only getting up the circulation now. You may come too, if you like, only you see you are rather thick and heavy, and though the coping would be sure to hold, it is not too wide, and the branches might perhaps happen to break."

"What *do* you mean?" asked Milly, forgetting cold, fear, and sleepiness in an utter surprise as Helen once more sprang from the bed to the floor, whilst speaking, and ran across to one of the windows, of which for the first time

Milly noticed that the blind had been drawn up, giving to view the silver-moon touched beech-tree, whose leafless branches reached within three feet of the glass.

For answer to her schoolfellow's astonished query Helen Edison repeated laconically—"I'm going for a climb." Then she sprang up on to the broad window-sill, softly undid the bolt, and still more softly raised the sash.

"Good-bye, my dear," she said, with a mischievous little breath of a laugh. "I'll be back soon; don't go to sleep."

So saying she swayed her arms backwards and forwards once or twice, put her foot over the sill, and was about to bound outwards when her companion, now thoroughly aroused by the rush of fresh cold air and amazement at her friend's audacity, made a plunge at her, caught her from behind, and held her in a tight clasp, exclaiming loudly—

"O Helen, Helen! you shan't go, you shan't! You'll be killed!"

She had barely time to utter her protest before Helen had twisted herself free, jumped back to the floor, and clapped her hand over the noisy mouth.

"Milly! Hush, then, hush," she said rather

sharply, and in her most resolute manner. Then she pulled her forward towards the window, and pointing out said—"Look down there, Milly; although it's grass below, it would be a good way to fall, wouldn't it?"

"Why of course it would—a horrible way; that's the very thing," said Milly Wilmot, facing round with surprise. "Of course it would be a good way to fall—at least a bad way—that's why I wouldn't let you go. And you were actually going to risk it, though you have thought about it! How could you?"

"Don't say how 'could' you. Say how 'can' you, if you like, for I mean to go, although you have put off my charming journey for a few minutes. But going as I mean to go I don't consider any risk; going as I will go if you rouse up any one to stop me won't be a risk either, for it will be a certainty, for I will just take the jump straight off down to the ground there, and if it should kill me my death will lie at your door."

"Oh, how can you say so?" said Milly indignantly, who, logical or illogical, could at any rate see the unreasonableness of this statement.

But Helen was in no mood for argument. "Well, I don't care a bit, my dear, whether you

agree with me or not. I only know that I intend to make a certain journey through the air, during the next fifteen minutes, that I have long looked forward to, and that to prevent your trying to stop me I threaten to jump down there, and you know well I will keep the threat unless you promise to be quiet until I get back."

Milly looked at the brilliant, resolute young face before her, and she did know well that the perilous threat would be carried out if she gave cause for it. "But you will be killed!" she urged in despair.

"I won't be killed," answered Helen confidently. "Mamma says I have been in the constant habit of putting my life in jeopardy ever since I could crawl. I was only three years old when I managed on board a ship to get ever so far up a sailors' rope-ladder. When I got tired of climbing I just dropped my feet, clung with my hands, and set up a squeal. You may imagine what mamma felt when she saw where I was. But I was got down all right."

"Almost a pity you were!" pouted anxious Milly, "if you are to spend your days in keeping other folks in a perpetual state of worry about you."

"Poor, dear old Milly," murmured Nellie,

with another, soft little laugh. "She shan't be in a perpetual state of worry about me, she shan't, only now and then; and some day she shall go home with me and see my dear, dear mother, and that will make amends for everything."

So saying, with a parting kiss she once more sprang up on to the window-sill. Milly involuntarily covered her eyes with her hand, and did not open them again until a clashing of the tree branches told her that at any rate her school-fellow had accomplished the first step in her proposed journey—a journey about which she had several times speculated during the past few weeks, but as Milly had hitherto supposed, merely as a matter for the exercise of imagination.

Crofton House was a beautifully irregular mass of building of mingled dark-red brick and granite. There were turns, and twists, and angles everywhere, inside and out. Broad window-sills, corridors, dim corners, and archways within; and little balconies, copings, ivy, non-understandable projections, and queer-headed waterspouts without. The place had been built by a gentleman according to his own fancy, and when he died its great size in proportion to the



"A clashing of the tree branches told her," &c.—Page 100.

ground belonging to it made it so unmarketable that Miss Crofton found her little fortune sufficient to cover the purchase money. Having thus invested her all in the building, she soon succeeded in winning through it good interest for her money, and its eccentricities had never before excited any of her numerous pupils to perilous adventures. Fortunately for the peace of mind of schoolmistresses, there are not many Helen Edisons in the world.

The room occupied by Helen and her two schoolfellows was in one of the most deep-set of all the angles, and it had two great windows and a little one. One of the great windows had a clear look out over the garden and fields beyond, but for the beech-tree into which Helen jumped. The long, narrow middle window had a quite unimpeded clear look out, and was furnished with a minute balcony, about capable of holding one good-sized flower-pot. The second large window was the original cause of Helen's daring enterprise. She called it a spiteful window, for its outlook was close on to a bit of sharp projecting wall, which had been added to the house with somewhat peculiar effect at the last hour, when it was found that otherwise this room and the bay-windowed room next but one

to it would inconveniently clearly and closely overlook each other.

Helen called the window spiteful, but her abuse was really intended for the wall. She would have had the greatest satisfaction in helping to pull it down. "And then," as she said to little Rose, who, with her sister, occupied the small bay-windowed room, "you and I would have such fun. We could throw things across to each other, and talk to each other, and I could act all sorts of things at this window for your benefit."

Rosie, too, sighed over that interfering late-built bit of wall, but she never dreamt, like her schoolfellow, of revenging herself by creeping round it.

Having successfully made her leap into the beech-tree Helen's next proceeding was to descend to the ground, run a couple of yards and climb into a second far smaller tree, which helped her up to a wall coping some way below the spiteful window. To step on to this coping and make her footing sure from the swaying tree was a work of care even for her slight, agile figure, and with the help of clinging to an out-stretched gargoyle. Milly put her hand over her own mouth to keep herself from shrieking

as she watched her friend pull herself up from this precarious platform, to another narrow ledge three feet higher up, by aid of another gargyle.

When Helen had reached this point she paused for a few moments and turned her face, with a smiling nod, to Milly. It was the last she would be able to see of her until her return, for she was now at the edge of the projecting wall. The next moment she caught with her disengaged right hand at some sprays of ivy, threw her right foot round the corner, and was gone. From that point the journey was not so difficult. The ivy helped her to pull herself up another two feet to a broad brick ledge, passing immediately beneath the windows of the small intermediate room, of Josephine Bell's room, and of that adjoining, where the two English governesses slept. After that it gave way to another form of ornament utterly useless for climbing purposes.

At each of the three rooms the young midnight traveller made a pause. At the Bells' window she was so startled that she almost fell backwards. She suddenly found herself within a few inches of Josephine herself. But for the glass she must have been discovered now, even by her breathing.

The wan, sad schoolgirl was standing with her back to the window, her lint-white hair pressed against the glass, through which the moonlight streamed upon the open pages of a book, held up to catch as much light as possible! Even thus she was trying to master her tasks for that hard young English governess, who could look to her own comforts, but had not yet learned to look to the comforts of others.

"Poor Josephine!" murmured Helen, with bright tears glittering in her eyes. She was doubly glad now that a few days before she had gained the Principal's leave to give help to her companion, although as yet sympathetic diffidence had held her back from offering that help.

"I won't put it off any longer," she murmured, and the tears fell, and lay shining on the window sill until the wind came by and carried them upwards. Helen crept along her strange footway to the next window. She could not see in through that. The blind was down and the curtains drawn, and Miss Rowe was fast asleep. Could Helen Edison have seen her at that moment she would have been as startled as she was at finding herself so close to Josephine Bell.

Miss Rowe was smiling in her sleep, with as

loving a look upon her face as Miss Crofton could have worn. She was dreaming of her young brother, and of the happy holidays she would make for him when he came home from school at midsummer, if he brought home a good report; and if not—well, for her little brother Miss Rowe was very tender-hearted.

Helen got back safely to her anxious friend, although the return journey was a matter of more difficulty than the outward one, and the last step bid fair to defeat even Helen. It was all well enough to jump from a firm ledge on to a tree; but to attempt jumping from a tree on to the ledge was a very different matter, and, indeed, seemed impossible. Helen made two attempts, but the branches swayed and rocked, and she could not get a spring from them. A day came when she tried again and did it, but that was in a case of life and death, with fire raging round. Now the need was not so supreme as to give the courage for the great risk.

"Well," she said at last, with something like a sigh, "I suppose you had better shut the window, Milly, or you will be catching cold through my fault. And it is no good your waiting there any longer. I can't manage this jump."

Milly had become conscious of the same fact, nevertheless she looked greatly aghast when Helen herself confessed her helplessness. "Whatever are you going to do, then?" she asked, half crying. "Shall I go and call the servants?"

"No indeed," was the hasty answer. "I shall stay here, and watch my opportunity to slip in at the back door when it is opened in the morning."

"You'll be frozen to death," expostulated Milly, her own teeth chattering as she spoke; but a short "Nonsense" was the only reply to that declaration, and then the agile, daring young tomboy slipped down from the tree, and was lost to sight. Milly remained shivering at the open window for a few minutes longer, and then, with a doleful groan for her wilful companion, closed it softly and went back to bed. But she was not destined to get quiet rest just yet.

She had just laid herself down when she was startled by two sharp taps upon the window-pane. In five seconds she was back at her former post, and there was the handsome young face of her schoolfellow, beaming with fun and excitement, looking in at her. Helen had found the gardener's ladder, which the boy had care-

lessly left out the previous evening, and it had not taken her long to reap the advantage of her discovery. In another minute she was once more safe on the floor of her room.

"And what will be said when the ladder is found up against this window in the morning?" asked Milly, with a mingling of anxiety and triumph.

"Not knowing can't say," was the cool answer, as Miss Nellie took a bundle of strong cord out of her drawer, and proceeded to unroll it, and pass one end round the top rung of the ladder. A good push outwards soon deposited the ladder quietly and safely beneath the tree, instead of up at the window, and ten minutes later the young maiden was sleeping as peacefully as if she were the most quiet young lady in the world. Both the girls ought to have caught bad colds; perhaps it was the excitement that saved them.

CHAPTER XIII.

AN HOUR IN JOSEPHINE'S STUDY.

"O ROSIE, Rosie, I cannot understand it. It is no good; my head won't take it in."

And, with a low cry of mingled weariness and despair, Josephine dropped her head on to two hands that for the past ten minutes had been resting on her knee, and turned her eyes to their owner's face. As she did so a second cry escaped her, but with a very different accent in it from the last.

"Why, Helen Edison, is it you—is it you who have been kneeling by me so patiently for the past ten minutes?"

"And why not?" asked Helen, laughing. "Do you think, as Miss Rowe does, that it is utterly impossible for me to be quiet or sensible?"

"I don't think anything about you that Miss Rowe does," was the quick answer. And

then, still more quickly, "I mean, I think, I know you better than Miss Rowe does. She does not feel the kindness in you as I do. But go now, please dear. You know no one is allowed to be here with me during recreation hours except Rosie, and I could not bear you to get into another trouble on my account. Please go."

"Do you dislike my being here?"

"Dislike!" echoed Josephine wonderingly. "Don't laugh at me, but, do you know, I feel sometimes as if looking at you was like looking at courage itself put into a real form. I shall feel brave enough now to try once more to conquer that lesson when you are gone."

"But I am not going," said Helen, with a mischievous toss of her head, which gave way, however, at sight of her schoolfellow's distress, to a quiet smile, as she added, "No, Josie, I am not going, if you like me to stay. Miss Crofton has given me leave to sit with you for half an hour four times a week."

Josephine stared. "Given you leave! Do you mean that you have asked to spend your playtime in this dull little room?"

"I don't think it is a dull little room," was the answer, "with you and your books in it."



“Helen made a necklace of her two arms round her companion's neck.”
—Page 113.

And, Josie, I'm going to ask you a favour. I want to know if you will let me try to—to——" and the colour deepened in fearless Helen's cheeks, and she stammered before poor stupid Josephine, who gazed at the phenomenon in speechless amazement.

"To ask *me* a favour?" she said at last. "That sounds too good to be true. Why, even Rosie scarcely ever thinks of asking me anything. What can you want that I can—at least that you think I can—do for you?"

Helen got up from her knees, and going behind her companion's chair made a necklace of her two arms round her companion's neck as she replied in a low, rather hurried voice, so unlike her usual independent utterances—

"Please don't be vexed with me, Josephine. I know I am ever so much younger than you, and idle, and not at all clever, but perhaps—if—do you think you would let me try to help you in your work a little sometimes?"

For some moments there was no answer. All was silence in that dingy little lesson room. Then Helen stooped her head lower, laying her cheek gently on her companion's head, as she whispered—

"Try to forget what I have said, Josie dear,

and please to know, now and always, that I did not say it to hurt you. I will run away now."

And then, with one kiss on the pale cheek, she was turning hastily away, feeling painfully that she had added another sting to her schoolfellow's dreary lot. She was soon undeceived. She had not set a second step before she was caught back, and held tightly, while Josephine's weary, patient, hot eyes were cooled, for the first time for many months, with a refreshing flood of tears.

"Please don't cry," whispered Helen, with fresh remorse.

"Oh! you don't know how comfortable it is," was the heartfelt answer. "I was only thinking, the other day, that perhaps I never should be able to cry any more. I seemed to have grown too dull and heavy."

"Ah! that is just it," exclaimed Helen Edison, suddenly recovering her spirits and animation when she found that her offer had, after all, been balm rather than a wound. "That is just it, Josephine, I am sure. You are not really dull and heavy; but you have been growing dull and heavy. Yes—that is the very thing I have been expecting."

Josephine sat up, and left off crying to stare at her companion.

"Oh, but, Helen, I really am dull and stupid."

"Don't believe it," was the short contradiction, accompanied by a shake of the curly head, and a smile. "You came to school after a life in India and a lot of illnesses, with no education; and you and the folks here set to work at once to pump into your brain babies' learning, and children's learning, and girls' learning, and a lot of 'finishing elegancies,' as my nurse calls them, all at once. And I think you have all been just as wise as if you had put a freezing person into a doubly-heated hothouse, and kept on raising the temperature. First of all, the freezing creature would have suffered a horrible pain, as you did when you suddenly found how ignorant you were; and then he would have gradually got suffocated past all feeling, and ended by dying, as your wish to learn will end by dying, if you go on trying to do impossibilities, and finding, to your perpetual discouragement, that they won't be mastered. And there now! There's a long speech for you; but I mean it every bit, and I've been thinking it out to say to you for ever so many days past."

"Have you?" said Josephine, looking up with a flickering smile. "Had you thought of the freezing man, and all?"

"Oh, dear yes!" was the laughing answer. "But I thought of half a dozen similes besides that. The frog, beginning modestly as a tadpole, and the butterfly as a grub, and heaps of others, only, as my half-hour is beginning to run short, perhaps I had better not waste time to tell you any more to-day. What work are you preparing for to-morrow?"

"Trying to prepare, you mean," corrected Josephine, sighing, but with something of a glimmer of hope struggling into her face, as she turned to the table at which she had been studying, and pulled a heap of books forward towards her schoolfellow. "For to-morrow I have a French exercise, with the rules to learn by heart; a German exercise, with the rules—oh, those dreadful rules—to learn by heart; a chapter of Roman history to be questioned on; a couple of pages of geography to learn by heart; these three dreadful Rule of Three sums to do, and I do not understand the rule one bit better now than when Miss Rowe explained it——"

"I don't suppose you do, and much she cares," muttered Helen, in interruption. Then she said, "But go on, please. Anything more?"

"Yes; a chapter of Morris's Heathen Mytho-

logy, and—and," in a very low voice, "a page of spelling."

"Ah!" said Helen calmly, as if she had not noticed the lowered tone nor the tinge of shame in poor Josephine's cheeks. "Ah, what a clever idea of yours to learn that! Papa says that he has scarcely ever known a woman who spelt really correctly, and that it is a disgrace to our sex that it should be so. We won't cut off that one of your lessons, at any rate, and I will learn it with you. But how many of the others do you expect to know properly?"

"None," answered Josephine, her wan face again overspreading with an expression of despair, which was startled away before it could grow very definite by Helen's quick, clear voice retorting, coolly—

"No, I should just think not indeed! Nine months ago, you have told me yourself, you had forgotten every little bit of French you ever knew. German you had never looked at. Arithmetic the doctors had never let you touch, and if they could see you now I am certain they would continue the same veto. By-the-bye, was it the Rule of Three rules you were studying by the moonlight last night?"

"Ye——" began Josephine, and then break-

ing off too startled to finish even that short affirmative. Her pale eyes darkened with wonder and some nervous anxiety as she asked, almost breathlessly—

“How do you know I was studying by moonlight? You could not have seen me through the keyhole, even if you would condescend to try, which I am sure you would not.”

“I should think not indeed!” said Helen indignantly. Then, half laughing, she added, “Never mind troubling your head about how I gained my knowledge, Josie. If wise old Solomon were here just now, I expect he would repeat his proverb to you—‘A bird of the air shall carry the matter.’”

A mischievous smile passed over Miss Nellie’s face as she uttered the apt quotation, and joined to it a request that her companion would mention to no one the fact of her having gained this knowledge, which Josephine began to put down to a clever guess, as every one in the school knew that she seized every possible and almost impossible time to study. Little she dreamt that the bright, beautiful eyes had been within a few inches of her during the night, and that they had brimmed over with sad tears for her sake. But she had little time just then for

dreaming anything. Helen had come to the study to give help, and she was determined to render it without further loss of opportunity. Piling together and carrying to another table everything but the French books, the Roman History, and the spelling, she said quietly—

“Papa says one of the sins of the present day is a way people have fallen into of trying to make their brains tell falsehoods. They stuff a lot of things into their minds, and then tell their muddled brains to say they know them, when as a fact they really know no more about them properly than the man in the moon. I wonder which you would rather do, go on telling falsehoods, or begin to tell the truth?”

Josephine looked shocked and hurt as she answered—

“O Helen! the truth, you know. But indeed I have never told the falsehoods, nor let my brain tell them. I have known always that I knew nothing.”

“Then it is time you began to know something,” said Helen calmly, or rather with an outward appearance of calmness. Inwardly she was feeling very anxious. She knew that it would be utterly impossible to be of any real use to poor Josephine if she insisted on keeping

up the accumulation of studies she had undertaken; but Helen much feared if she should have powers of persuasion strong enough to induce her schoolfellow to give up any item of what she had regarded hitherto as her duty. As usual, when Helen doubted herself, she fell to quoting her father's thoughts, and once more they stood her in good stead. Josephine consented to give up Professor Smith and the German governess, and then she and Helen set to work together at the Roman History, and before five minutes had passed Josephine had forgotten, for the first time since she had been at Crofton House, that she was engaged upon a difficult task.

CHAPTER XIV.

HAPPY LEARNING AND A DANGEROUS SWING.

“OH dear! I do wish I had been a man in those days, and could have fought by the side of Hannibal!” exclaimed Helen impulsively, as she and her companion sat together reading. “Of course the Scipios were all very fine, but I almost hate them when I think of conquered Hannibal.”

“Do you?” murmured Josephine with vague wonder, and turning her eyes back to the page with a strange new interest. Hitherto Hannibal and Scipio, and all the other historical characters and events, had been little more real to her than the imaginary eight men who were engaged to build the house in her Rule of Three sum, or the x that represented the days in which they built it. Helen had already taught her more than all she had yet learnt at school. But neither of the girls comprehended that, although

Josephine gave a contented sigh when Helen at last shut the book, and said, gratefully—

“How pleasant this reading has been! Thanks to you, Helen, this lesson has been anything but a task. I really do hope I shall not give Miss Rowe so much trouble to-morrow as I generally do.”

“As to that,” said Helen, returning to her defiant mood, “that is the only thing I am sorry about. Horrid creature! However, I dare say I can find out some way to be aggravating, so as to make up.”

“O Helen!” began Josephine, almost angrily; then she suddenly relapsed into silence; and when Helen came back from the bookcase she found her companion with her arms on the table, her head resting on them, and crying bitterly.

Helen stood still for a few moments uncertain what to do. At last she bent over her school-fellow, and whispered softly—

“Are these, too, comfortable tears, like those others?”

“No, no!” murmured Josephine in a broken voice. “I am crying now because I am too stupid to help you; and oh! I wish I could.”

“Help me—how?” inquired Helen, in a tone

of surprise. "To get the better of Miss Rowe, do you mean?"

"To get the better of yourself," said Josephine, in a low, earnest tone. "And yet you are so kind, so generous, so pleasant!"



"Oh!" ejaculated Helen sharply. And then there was a long silence.

Josephine, leaning forward over the table, her face buried in her hands, was praying humbly, childishly—but oh how earnestly!—for power to help her friend.

Helen sat down, and appeared to be studying the French grammar. At last she said somewhat abruptly—

“Did you really mean just now, Josephine, that part of your care to know your history was to save that tigress, Miss Rowe, trouble?”

Josephine half turned, and took one of her companion's slim, little, white hands in hers. “Please, Helen, to please me, do not call her such names. But of course I should be glad to save her trouble. Her life must be hard enough without our adding to its burdens.”

“That would be all very well,” retorted Helen hotly, “if she were kind and pleasant, like Miss Crofton and Mademoiselle, or just like Fräulein ; but she is spiteful and unjust and cruel.”

“You judge her very hardly,” said Josephine, in a low tone. “But if she really is all that, then we should do good to them that despitefully use us and persecute us.”

“You are laughing !” said Helen scornfully.

“Laughing !” exclaimed Josephine, now fairly lifting her tear-stained face, and turning it to her companion. “Laughing about our Saviour's words ! O Helen ! how can you think I could be so wicked, so—ungrateful !”

There was a tender, loving pathos in that last

slowly uttered word that impressed the hearer more than a dozen sermons could have done. There was a slight flush on Helen's face when she replied—

“Well, not laughing perhaps; but—of course—at least I mean if you feel like that, I don't. I don't set up for being awfully good. I didn't know you did, or I wouldn't have shocked you.”

“But I don't,” said Josephine timidly; “I only try to take His comforting offer—‘Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, . . . and ye shall find rest unto your souls.’”

“Humph,” grunted Helen; “but I don't pretend to be meek and lowly. If any one makes an enemy of me let them look out. I warn them, as far as I am concerned, it's all to fear and no favour. You find it hard to learn German and arithmetic. But I should find it a great deal harder to learn this meek and mild business, and I don't want to either.”

“And yet it is such happy learning,” murmured Josephine, and a light came over the wan, worn face such as Helen had never yet seen on the countenance of any one. She felt awed by it.

But being awed was not being subdued, and she was not sorry when the door opened and

Miss Crofton appeared, saying with a slight tinge of reproach in her voice—

“Miss Edison, my dear, you have forgotten your promise. You have been here an hour instead of the half-hour for which I gave permission. You will not keep those rosy cheeks long if you give up taking plenty of exercise.”

Helen took her schoolmistress's hand and laid her cheek down on it in the peculiar caressing way she had with any one for whom she had a special liking.

“Don't be vexed just this once, please, Madam. Josephine has been turning the tables on me. When we had finished our reading she tried to reward me by teaching me something else.”

Miss Crofton looked inquiringly at her eldest pupil, but she only caught a glimpse of a very wistful expression on the downcast face, and she never forced confidence.

“Whatever Josephine tries to teach you, you will do well to learn, my child,” she said gently “But run away now, it will be preparation-time before you have had one dance or game of battledore.”

“Oh, those are not my last favourites,” exclaimed Helen, with an instant change of

manner, and starting up. "What do you think I did yesterday? I believe it would be thought splendid even for a boy. You know the chairs in the hall?"

"Yes, my dear, certainly," replied Miss Crofton, looking somewhat bewildered by the unexpected and abrupt interrogation. "What about the chairs?"

"Why, do you know, back to back, I actually jumped over them both. Not one of the others could come near me. Do just come and see me do it again, please! I should like you to so much."

"I daresay, indeed," was the answer, with an irrepressible laugh; "and I should so much like not to. I should expect to see you break your legs. You are the queerest mixture of girl, woman, baby, and tomboy I ever met with."

"Not much of a baby," half pouted Miss Nellie.

"Indeed, young lady! Pray who sent an order yesterday down to Jeffrey's, by Jem, for a shilling's worth of hardbake and lemon drops?"

Helen laughed and blushed. "Papa says all good-tempered people like sweet things. And I've been going without so long that I was beginning to be afraid I might turn sour. But

I did try to find you to ask permission before I sent for them, only you had gone out."

"Yes, and luckily for you both I met your messenger outside the shop, and he very properly told me of his commission and handed me your purchases."

"If he had not told you, you don't suppose that I should not have done so the first opportunity I got, do you?" asked Helen, with mingled anxiety and indignation. "You don't think I should be so intensely unladylike as to get the servants to do things for me I would not have you know! I do many little things myself that I would rather you did not find out, but I don't descend to getting the servants or any one else to help me in them."

"No, my dear, I do not think you are capable of such an act," said Miss Crofton gravely, whilst her eyes rested on the girl's flushed cheeks. "But why," she added after a moment's pause, "if you have this strong sense of honour in some respects, do you ever allow yourself to do behind my back what you would not do to my face?"

"Oh, that's quite a different thing, you see," was the saucy answer. "If I were a man I'd belong to the Alpine Club, and climb the

Matterhorn the most dangerous side I could find, without a guide, and I'd hunt tigers in Bengal jungles, and go looking for the North Pole; but as I can't do any of those things, the only pleasure left to me is to get into scrapes and what little nice difficulties I can invent for myself."

"Dear me!" said Miss Crofton, with a very deep and genuine sigh. "You really make me almost wish that I had never undertaken the charge of you, or that your three years here had come to an end."

"Oh, but you won't send me away!" exclaimed Helen, terrified at the earnest tone. "Pray don't. I can't promise to be quiet and smooth and proper like Clara Boswell. I should pine away into an idiot, I know, if I tried. But I do like you and Josephine and little Rosie so much, so very much; please don't want me gone. It—it sounds—cruel of you!"

There were tears in the bright eyes, and the bright face was hastily turned away to hide them.

"Don't grieve," said Josephine softly, coming forward, and putting her arm around her young schoolfellow. "Miss Crofton does not mean that she quite really wishes you away."

"No indeed," said the Principal, kissing both her pupils. "I should indeed greatly miss your joyous face, my child; but you do make my anxieties greater than they have ever been before."

"I am so sorry!" was the penitent ejaculation; and five minutes later, the rain having ceased, and the girls trooped into the garden, Miss Crofton felt her heart leap upwards as she saw Helen Edison flying backwards and forwards in the air, clinging by her hands only to the bottom of the swing, the upper strings of which she had shortened considerably to suit her purpose, while she kept shouting to her companions who held the side ropes, "Higher, higher!"

"Stop!" exclaimed Miss Crofton, running out through her French window. "Stop, stop! she will fall! she will be killed!"

The startled girls stopped, clutched at their schoolfellow, and almost the next moment there was a heap of arms, and heads, and frocks, and feet tumbled pell-mell on the ground. As one bit of the heap struggled upwards a voice exclaimed, with a ripple of silver laughter—

"O Madam! you did spoil a beautiful swing in a dangerous way!"

CHAPTER XV.

HELEN'S EXERCISE-BOOK.

It was preparation-time again. Josephine and Rosa Bell had been away three days, and Helen missed them very much, although a letter received that morning from the two sisters had been some satisfaction to her.

Miss Rowe had received a letter by the same post, with the same postmark, and as she sat at her desk in the quiet class-room she dropped her work into her lap and drew it from her pocket for the fourth or fifth time since the morning. And as she read, with moistened eyes and a softened face, she became altogether oblivious of the crowd of young scholars by whom she was surrounded, until a titter from the farther side of the long table jarred upon her nerves and startled her back to recollection.

She raised her head quickly. All tenderness and gentleness had died away, as she exclaimed, angrily—

"Miss Wilmot, what are you about? Is that the way you attend to your lessons? And you too, Miss Trew. Miss Boswell, you will have the goodness to claim fines from both of them."

At that moment unfortunate Milly exploded with another titter, winding up, in her attempts to restrain herself, with a peculiar convulsive squeak, which was too much for the nerves of every one but the enraged governess.

"How dare you laugh at what I say!" she cried passionately. "I will inform Miss Crofton of your impertinence."

"I—I," began Milly, stammering.

"She wasn't laughing at you," interrupted Helen. "She was laughing at something I showed her."

"And what was that?"

"Something of mine."

"I asked you *what* it was," repeated Miss Rowe, with increased anger. "Show it to me at once."

"I would rather not," was the cool reply. "It is only one of my drawings, and you don't appreciate them. Pass it back, Kate Morley."

"Pass it to *me*!" exclaimed the governess imperiously. And starting forward as she spoke she took advantage of the girl's momentary

hesitation to gain possession of the book, and five seconds later it, with all its contents of exercises and drawings, was ascending in flames and smoke up the class-room chimney.

Helen sprang to her feet, and for the minute looked as furious as her governess.

Then the passion gave way to a mocking smile, and she said, with a sneer most repulsive on her fair young face, "I am glad the likeness was so good. It was clever of me to get it so well, wasn't it?"

Miss Rowe left the room, and shortly returned with the Principal, who looked very gravely annoyed as she walked up to Helen Edison, and said, "Miss Edison, I am greatly grieved to hear such a serious charge brought against you. I had no idea that you could condescend to deliberately insult a lady. That you could be aggravating, tiresome, very trying in many ways, I knew, and I have not been much troubled on that score. I trusted to time and your innate common-sense to cure you, in due course, of those blemishes in your character. But I have never hitherto supposed you capable of doing anything absolutely unladylike. There is something of meanness, too, in trying to involve others in a feeling of illwill that you may yourself choose to indulge."

Helen's cheeks flushed hotly as, with lowered head, she replied, "I had not thought of all this. I only did it for fun at the moment."

"When people choose to foster enmity they very seldom do think of anything but their own bad passions," replied Miss Crofton. "But now, as I see you are sorry, I hope Miss Rowe will accept your penitence without any more being said, and that I shall never again hear of your pencil causing such just annoyance."

And then Miss Crofton went away, and her pupils once more subsided into their places, Milly whispering, "There, Nelly, you'll never be able to put human beings' heads on to animals' bodies again."

"Not real human beings," corrected Helen.

"What was the drawing?" whispered the next neighbour but one to Kate Morley, to her neighbour.

"A cat sitting up weeping over a broken birch rod, with a group of kittens round her, and the cat's face was Miss Rowe's; she was holding a letter, too, in one paw, and looking very sentimental."

"Nelly is much more like a boy than a girl," said Rose Trew. "But really it is too bad of her now, for Miss Rowe has been much more

patient the last day or two, and I do really think she must be going to be ill."

At this moment Miss Rowe exclaimed, in anything but a patient tone, "Silence, or I will fine you all!"

Helen's insult had undone all the good caused by Josephine's gentleness and meek sympathy. Miss Rowe was harder than ever. But none would have been more cut to the heart than Helen herself, could she have known the moment she had chosen to make the young governess an object of ridicule to her pupils. To Miss Rowe herself it made her untoward pupil's act appear one of actual barbarity, and dislike leapt at once into absolute hatred.

Just when Milly Wilmot's titter had withdrawn her attention from her letter Miss Rowe had been dwelling for about the tenth time upon the words, "Do, please, tell Helen Edison about dear, pretty little Harry. You would find she is so different from what you think. If only you would give her this letter to read, you would find that she would begin to love little Harry so much that you would both get to be friends directly, and she will be so sorry then that she has ever worried you."

As Miss Rowe sat bending over the letter

that was so filled with pleasant news, kind words, and tender sympathy, she felt that for the writer's sake she would even give heed to that simple pleading, and try whether Josephine's recipe would turn an enemy into a friend. Josephine's patience and humility had made a difference in her, so it might be possible that trust and a plea for sympathy might win Helen Edison.

Then came those smothered laughs, and the discovery of the mocking caricature, and, with a sudden revulsion of feeling, Miss Rowe felt that she would much rather have Helen's hatred than her affection, and that it would be desecration to her beloved little brother's name even to breathe it to such a "detestable girl."

CHAPTER XVI.

BREAKING THE RULES.

“WHAT *are* you about, Helen? Oh do, please, tell me! At least, no—I mean, don’t.”

Helen started violently, hastily pushed a drawer to, and jumped up from the chair in front of it, on which she had been seated.

“O Rose! how you frightened me!” she exclaimed, in a tone in which displeasure and relief were pretty equally blended. “Why are you here? Don’t you know that you have no business in this room?”

“It’s not my fault, Helen; indeed it’s not,” faltered poor Rose, almost overwhelmed by the stern voice of the schoolfellow who was generally so good to her. “And I did give just two little coughs outside on purpose to let you know, as I wasn’t to rap.”

“What *do* you mean?” asked Helen, looking thoroughly mystified. “Why were you not to

rap? Who said that you were not to? And what have you come for?"

"I have come to tell you that you have been upstairs a great deal too long, and that you are to come down. Miss Rowe sent me, you know, Helen. And she said that I was not to rap. She made me promise not, but just to walk right in, and then tell her what I saw you doing."

Helen's eyes flashed. "Just like her, the—the—sneak! There! that's the only right word for her; but don't you use it, Rosie, because it's horribly ugly—almost as ugly as the thing it means. And now run downstairs, and say that I am coming directly. I will tell you to-morrow what I was about when you came in."

"No, please don't," said the child, looking up with a grateful smile. "Of course I should like to know, because you seemed to have got such a heap of pretty ribbon and things in the drawer; but I would really rather that you did not say, because Miss Rowe would be sure to make me tell her, you know."

"All right, Trots," was the calm answer. "We'll risk that to-morrow, for I certainly will get leave from Miss Crofton for you to come and have a peep into that ribbon-drawer yourself

as a bit of a birthday treat. But hark! there is that 'loud, sweet voice' calling us. You will come in for a scolding too if I keep you any longer."

So saying, Helen gave her schoolfellow a gentle little push towards the stairs, and shouted down them, "Coming!" Then she flew back to her room, lifted a light dress out of a lower drawer, and, opening the one of whose contents Rose had caught a glimpse, she quickly laid the dress in it over everything, put a necktie or two and a pair of gloves on the top of the dress, and then murmuring to herself with a smile, "Miss Rowe won't learn much now, I imagine, to satisfy her curiosity if she opens my drawers," she also ran down to the large classroom.

She found herself almost face to face with the English governess when she entered.

"At last!" said Miss Rowe, with cold anger. "You very nearly gave me the trouble, Miss Edison, of coming to fetch you myself."

"That would have been tiresome for you, but a comfort to me," said Helen coolly; "for if you had come up I should not have had to come down. I have only come now to tell you that I hope for the future you will not teach the youngest here to break the rules of the school.

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If I were not so fond of little Rose yonder I should have taken her just now, when she came into my room contrary to orders, and locked her in Miss Crofton's room, and left her there as punishment till Miss Crofton herself came home to scold her. And I should have kept the key in my pocket. And," she added significantly, "I am pretty strong, and being only a school-girl, I have no dignity to lose in a scuffle. Now I am going upstairs again."

"Stay where you are!" shouted Miss Rowe, furiously.

During her pupil's long speech she had stood as one petrified. To say that for a while she could not believe her own ears would be only feebly to express the truth of her strange state of feelings as Helen went on speaking. From her very childhood she had been accustomed to much deference. She could be kind enough even now-a-days to those who submitted implicitly to her rule, but every one must submit; and that one of those girls over whom, from the circumstances of the case, she had naturally exercised an unusually complete sway, should dare to assert an open defiance appeared for some breathless moments to be absolutely out of the bounds of possibility.

As long as Helen Edison remained still, and continued to speak in her calm, even tones, so long her hearer clung desperately to the bewildered belief that she must be dreaming a disgraceful, impossible dream. But when Helen, with her final words, turned to leave the room the spell was broken, and, almost beside herself with passion, Miss Rowe sprang forward and seized her by the shoulder, shouting, "Stay where you are, you impertinent girl, and don't dare to move until I give you leave! You shall stand there as an example to your companions as long as I choose!"

"I shall do no such thing," retorted Helen, suddenly flinging herself free from the clasp. And then, folding her arms and drawing herself up to the utmost of her slim height, she stood, with flashing, scornful eyes, confronting the governess.

"Don't dare to lay a finger on me again," she said, in a low, hard voice. "I shall strike you if you do. You rouse everything that is bad in my nature. I am going back to my room now, because I have had Miss Crofton's leave to be there these two hours before tea. But if I had not had leave I should have to go there now to try to get back patience to be with you."

And so saying the girl once more turned slowly, passed through the open door, closed it quietly behind her, and was gone, leaving a dead silence to follow her departure.

Miss Rowe was, for once in her life, conquered, and with the additional mortification of being surrounded by those who were likely to rejoice in her intense humiliation. At this thought she looked quickly towards the long table surrounded with its crowd of rosy-faced, bright-eyed workers. All heads were raised from the crewels, darning, and hemming, and she caught glances passing from schoolfellow to schoolfellow significant of amusement and delight. That was the last drop. Her wrath quite mastered her. She flew upstairs after Helen, and furiously turned the handle of the door. The door moved about a quarter of an inch, and then stuck fast.

Helen Edison had not experimented, and speculated, and read up all manner of queer bits of information for nothing. She was full of all sorts of resources for all sorts of occasions. Just now she wanted to ensure having the room to herself for a little while, and so she had improvised a wedge under the door, keys being unknown luxuries to the pupils' bedrooms. And

her wedge proved such a success that not all Miss Rowe's angry shaking forced it from its place, or drove the door over it.

At last the governess went off to her own room, fetched the key thence, and finding that it fitted this other lock as well as the one to which it rightly belonged, she felt that she had at length gained some poor little triumph when she pulled Helen's door close again, locked it from the outside, and then called through, "Since you wish to stay in your room, there you shall stay without your tea, and until it is time for those who share it with you to come in to get ready for bed."

Then she hurried away downstairs with the key in her pocket; but she was not able to go fast enough to avoid hearing her pupil's mocking "Thank you," exclaimed in answer to her information.

Miss Rowe would perhaps have been a good deal surprised could she have known how her adversary was occupied when she followed her upstairs. Having gained the room, and secured the door, Helen had flung herself on her knees by her bedside and broken into silent but bitter sobbing, that shook her from head to foot.

"O God! forgive me for getting into these

fierce passions!" she murmured, imploringly. "Oh! forgive me. Help me to conquer myself. However mischievous I may be, oh! help me to get rid of these awful fits of passion!"

And while she was so praying, and thus struggling with herself, the governess had come up, and well-nigh thrown her back into her former hard, vengeful state of temper. She rose from her knees.

"Ah, well! It's no use to pray to be good, or even tolerable," she muttered with a sort of sullen despair, "while I have to be in the same house with that creature."

With this decision she walked over to the drawer at which she had been occupied ten minutes or so since when Rosa Bell interrupted her, drew up her chair again, and was very soon once more deep in the work over which she had begged, and readily obtained, kind Miss Crofton's permission to spend the working afternoon quietly hidden in the bedroom. She paid no apparent heed to the beating and shaking at the door, and only troubled herself to open her lips once when she called out that exasperating cool "Thank you."

CHAPTER XVII.

A DOLL FOR LITTLE ROSA, AND A GOOD TEA.

WHEN Helen Edison had learnt from Josephine and Rosa Bell that it was quite impossible, according to all usual calculations, that Rosa should get any letters or presents, any single loving word or message of any kind, from her parents on her birthday, and when she had seen the big tears welling up into Rosa's big blue eyes as the child sighed over the sorrowful fact, Helen had privately decided that at all events something or other should be done to turn the anniversary into a *fête* day for the poor little thing.

She made up her mind, in the first place, that from the morning of that birthday Rosa should no longer be that doleful being, a toyless child, and, furthermore, she resolved to do her best to persuade Miss Crofton into letting the day be a general holiday. In consequence of her first resolve, she seized the opportunity of being

allowed one afternoon to go on a shopping expedition with Fräulein, to spend two-and-sixpence on a fine golden-haired doll. Then she bought a yard or two of rose-coloured satteen, some white muslin, a little remnant of black satin, and several yards of blue ribbons of various widths; and with all these treasures she returned to the school, her dark face glowing with happiness.

Kind-hearted Fräulein undertook the conversion of the rose satteen and black satin into an elegant promenade costume, while Helen determined somehow or other to find time to make the underclothes and the white muslin frock. But Helen's mother and Helen herself were very ambitious for her, and she had a great many classes, the work for which, in spite of quickness and cleverness, took a great deal of time. Thus it came to pass, that when the afternoon before the birthday arrived the doll's evening dress and all the rolls of blue ribbon were still untouched.

Even now the affair would not have been so desperate but for the natural desire to keep the whole matter secret from Rosa until the morrow, and the time between her going to bed and the general retirement would certainly not be suffi-

cient for the completion of the millinery. Under these circumstances, Helen began to feel rather hopeless of being able to give her present in its intended glory, until she suddenly bethought her of asking leave to spend the usual Wednesday afternoon working hours upstairs, where she could cut out and arrange at her ease.

Helen had caught Miss Crofton just as she was on the point of going out on a visit for the remainder of the day, and had not only obtained the leave she begged, to be allowed to spend her afternoon in her room in Rosa's service, but also a promise that the holiday should be "thought about," and the girl had flown off to her roll of muslin and ribbons in the best possible of happy humours. She would have found and told Miss Rowe of the permission granted her but that it happened she had met Fräulein, who offered to relieve her of what she considered an unpleasant duty. Unfortunately, Fräulein went back to her room, before fulfilling her promise, to give a finishing touch to a diminutive pair of boots which she had also manufactured out of the black satin, and all the miserable *fracas* had taken place long before she appeared in the schoolroom.

"But why did you not send down word by

Rose that you were permitted to stay up here ? ” whispered Fräulein through the keyhole a few minutes before tea, when she had learnt her favourite’s imprisonment, and had failed to move Miss Rowe to end it. She had hastened upstairs at once to express her deep sorrow that such a misfortune should have occurred through her dilatoriness.

“ Misfortune, do you call it ! ” exclaimed Helen through the door. “ I call it the finest piece of good fortune that could have happened to me. Only fancy getting four hours’ perfect quiet to do what one likes with. And I am very glad to have escaped the walk besides, for I did not feel at all inclined for it. I expect Miss Rowe would have made me walk with her, and then she would have tried to irritate me into speaking to her. It would have been worse than playing a game of ‘ Old Soldier ’ when one is not in the humour for it.”

Fräulein gave a ghost of a laugh. She began to believe that the prisoner was not seriously pining under captivity.

“ But, ach ! mein liebes Kind ! ” she whispered again, after a few moments’ pause, and in a tone of despair. “ She says that you shall have no tea, not even ein butter brod. That is too cruel.”

"Too cruel, indeed," repeated Helen, scornfully. "Ah! you don't know her, Fräulein. Nothing is too cruel for her. But wait a moment."

Hitherto Helen had been standing, during this little dialogue, by the bed nearest the door



that she might continue her dressmaking. But she now dropped the half-made frock on to it, and, turning, put her lips to the keyhole of the door and whispered through as cautiously as the German governess herself had done before.

"Fräulein."

"Ja, meine Liebe?"

"You can hear me, Fräulein?"

"But, yes, surely, mein Kind."

"Well then, Fräulein, I confess that I am beginning to feel hungry—I mean more hungry than usual, for I think I could any time of the day eat up a quartern loaf, like the Blue-coat Boy, if I had his luck to get the chance, and I wouldn't ask for the raspberry jam either."

Again Fräulein laughed softly, but murmured at the same time, "Armes Kind."

"Yes," whispered Helen, also laughing, "that is what I begin to feel like, a poor starved child; and as I am reduced to this condition by only Miss Rowe's orders, I see no reason why I should go on suffering. Do you?"

"No, assuredly. But how to help it! I have begged and begged for you, for your release, or for your meal to bring to you, but in vain."

"So much the better. It will be the more fun having it up here."

Fräulein shook her hands helplessly, and looked ready to cry as she whispered back almost impatiently, "It might be if you could. But I tell you she won't let you have it anywhere."

"But I will," replied Helen resolutely, "if

you will help me only just one little bit. You know these windows cannot be seen from either the dining-hall or the kitchen; so if you will just please find Louise, and ask her to run round the garden till she comes beneath this room, I will manage all the rest; I have a very long piece of string here."

"A very—long——" began Fräulein, wonderingly. And then a light suddenly broke over her face, and she exclaimed joyfully, "Ach, ja! I see. That will do so beautifully!"

In her gladness she momentarily forgot her hitherto prudently lowered voice, but fortunately it was of no consequence, as every one was already gathered downstairs in readiness for tea, the bell for which rang at this moment, and Fräulein rushed off instantly to find the good-tempered, ready-witted French house-maid, who was to provide that wilful, headstrong, generous-hearted Helen Edison with the food she had been sentenced to forego, and without which poor simple Fräulein imagined that she would certainly faint or fall ill.

As Helen heard the footsteps of the German governess receding down the corridor she got up from her knees, and taking her needlework she carried it with her to one of the windows, where

she plied her needle quickly, but kept at any-rate as much as half an eye on the garden below.

She was beginning to fear that one or other of her hoped-for allies had been intercepted in the attempt to aid her, or that their hearts had failed them, when the welcome sound of a somewhat subdued but merry little French song came to her ears, and the next moment she caught sight of the becoming snowy-white cap through the trees. Darting to one of her drawers she took out a carefully treasured coil of string, loosened the end, and got back to the window just as smiling Louise arrived beneath it.

"Vite, Ma'am'selle, vite. Dépêchez vous," cried the French girl softly. "They will be coming out, the chocolate took so long."

"Chocolate! did you say chocolate?" laughed Helen, as she hastily let down her string for Louise's basket. "Ah! that was that dear, good Fräulein's thought, I know. But mamma shall send her such a good present next Christmas; and you too, Louise."

"Oh! how good it smells!" as she carefully drew up the basket to the edge of the window, and then putting out her other hand, she lifted it over the ledge and examined the contents.

A little jugful of steaming rich chocolate, a

couple of rounds of hot buttered toast, and a piece of German honey bread.

"Well, I never!" murmured Miss Helen, her crimson lips curling with a merry mischievous little smile as she bent over her provisions. "Well, I never! I am rather afraid, if this is prisoner's fare, that I shall endeavour to be locked up again from time to time when I feel that my constitution, if not the calendar, requires a feast day."

Thus looking to the future, she drew her chair up to the broad window-sill and began to eat, Louise waiting down below meanwhile, and from minute to minute adjuring her rather anxiously to be quick, lest they should be discovered.

In spite of all Helen's efforts to yield obedience to this prayer, and her courage in scalding her mouth with the hot chocolate, frightened Louise only escaped being found out in her act of benevolence by overcoming her usual repugnance to earwigs and caterpillars, and creeping through the shrubbery instead of going round it; for just as she had once more got the basket, with the empty jug and plate, safely in her hand, the English governess came out from tea, and walked directly round to that part of the garden

overlooked by the culprit's windows, as though the idea had occurred to her that some attempt might be made to relieve the garrison.

But all Miss Rowe saw was her locked-up pupil standing by an open window, her elbows on the sill, her chin resting on her little white hands, and her large dark eyes apparently gazing disconsolately into space.

As a matter of fact, the large dark eyes were gazing delightedly at Louise's clever escape. And just as that amusement had come to an end, Helen withdrew her head again into the room, attracted by a little rustling noise at the door. As she turned the noise ceased, and in the small space between floor and door was a part of a sheet of white paper visible. She ran forward quickly and picked it up, muttering cautiously as she did so, "All right," in case there were any ears still lingering to hear her.

A soft sigh without answered her, and then she heard some one stealing swiftly away. She sat down on the edge of the bed and looked curiously at the sheet of paper. There was no writing on it, but there was a certain amount of thickness and weight about it.

"Something inside," muttered Helen, and with some difficulty she opened it. And there

certainly was something inside—a something which fully accounted for the sticking together of the two halves of the sheet of paper.

Inside the paper were several very wafery scraps of bread and butter, very much squeezed by being pushed under the door, and besides the bread and butter were a few words of writing in poor Josephine's scrawly, uncertain hand—"I am so sorry I cannot give you any more. I would have given you all my tea if I could—so would a number of us—only Miss Rowe kept looking round at all of us all tea-time, as if she guessed what we wanted to do. I could only manage to cut off these little bits, and I had put the sheet of paper ready in my apron pocket. Oh! I do so hope they'll be better than nothing."

"A great deal better than nothing," murmured the girl gently, as she read the simple, loving words, and the tears slowly rose in her proud young eyes, and rolled down the cheeks which the English governess could only make colour with haughtiness or passion. "A great deal better than nothing, poor, kind Josephine," she murmured again, "because of the love they tell. And I almost wish," she added, a smile beginning to glimmer through the tears, "that

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I had not just eaten that splendid feast, which makes me now a little disinclined for this second meal."

She eyed the squashed atoms of bread and butter sticking to the greasy paper for some time, tears and smiles alternately in her eyes, till at last merriment gained the day, and she broke into one of those silvery laughs which seemed to have some pleasant infection in them, for even sedate Clara Boswell used to smile, in spite of herself, when the musical sweet sounds fell upon her ears. The only person they gladdened now was little Rose, who had been lingering as near as she dared to the forbidden, and now flew down to the class-rooms to tell the astonishing but delightful piece of news to all who were likely to show due sympathy.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE PRINCIPAL'S PERPLEXITIES.

As Helen laughed she folded and laid by Josephine's gift, to be bestowed at some convenient moment upon the birds, and then, having washed her hands, she resumed her task upon the doll's frock with all possible haste, for, to tell the truth, it was by no means as far advanced as might have been expected from the long undisturbed afternoon she had been at liberty to bestow upon it.

The fact was, that for more than an hour after Miss Rowe had locked the door upon her, Helen had neglected the doll millinery altogether, and devoted her clever, nimble fingers to the manufacture of instruments of revenge upon her enemy. But with these the reader may meet in due time. Nothing more need be said about them at present but that they proved eminently satisfactory to their maker, and that

they were carefully packed in a paper box, and hidden away at the very bottom of a drawer for future purposes.

"Good-night," whispered Rose through the keyhole at eight o'clock, as she passed the door on her way to her own room.

"Good - night," answered Helen cheerfully. "You shall see something so pretty in my drawer to-morrow, Rosie. Pleasant dreams to you meantime."

And the child did have pleasant dreams, for she could not help beginning to have a little faint suspicion in her mind that the bright ribbons in Helen's drawer might have something to do with her. She had wished one day that the brown ribbons on her white muslin evening pinafores were a prettier colour. Perhaps Helen was going to change them for her to-morrow, had changed one already perhaps, for her to wear on her birthday. Or perhaps she had made her a pretty white pocket-handkerchief-case, tied across with blue ribbons like her own.

Rose thought of a dozen possible things, but she never came, even in her sleep, near what she would have supposed the quite impossible vision of beauty now lying fully dressed in Helen Edison's middle drawer.

All the neat little garments were made to take off, and even lace-trimmed handkerchiefs, and white kid shoes made out of a white kid glove and trimmed with blue rosettes, had not been forgotten; whilst the dainty muslin frock, with the broad piece of lace over blue silk down the front, and slashed sleeves over blue, was decidedly tasteful enough to justify Helen's touch of vanity as she looked at it in the fading light.

When it grew dark no candle was brought her, and so, with one sigh over the lesson-books and girls downstairs, she shut the doll's drawer, undressed, and went to bed, where she very soon fell fast asleep, and dreamt that Miss Rowe had got the doll out of its resting-place, had torn all its clothes to rags, and was now smashing its arms and legs, with Rose standing by crying bitterly at the destruction.

"How can you be so mean, so barbarously cruel!" exclaimed Helen, starting forward to snatch her doll; but some one gently put her back, saying—"Hush, dear! The tyrant is not here. Don't be frightened. Go to sleep again." And then she was kissed by a pair of soft, clinging lips.

Whether all this also was part of her dream

Helen never knew; but the next morning she looked curiously at grave, self-contained Clara Boswell, wondering whether she had very soft lips, and whether, perhaps, under certain circumstances, she could speak in a very tender, caressing voice. If she had been able to ask a little blind sister whom Miss Boswell had at home, she would have received a "yes" to both her questions; but she could not, and so her doubts were never solved.

But we are getting on too fast, and must go back a little. When Miss Crofton came home at night in time for the family prayers, as was her invariable custom during the term-time, Miss Rowe heard her ring, and at once hastened to her to give her version of the afternoon's disturbance, before any one else should have a chance of relating it in a way that should help to turn the balance of forgiveness in the pupil's favour instead of in her own.

As the English governess put the case it certainly looked very black against the pupil. She had remained up in the bedroom a very long time, contrary to rules; she had not condescended to give any reason, or, for a long time, to confess that she had leave. When she was sent for she had insolently taken her time

before coming down; and when at length she had come down, she had used the most impertinent and insulting language to Miss Rowe before the whole school, finally defying her to keep her downstairs, as she chose to be up, and then ending by fastening her door against her.

"When things came to that pass I locked her in," said Miss Rowe, "and there she is now."

"Locked her in?" repeated Miss Crofton, questioningly. "But, pray, how could you lock her in? There are no keys in the young ladies' doors."

The governess clasped her hands rather tightly as she replied, quickly, "No; but I fetched the key from my own door, and fortunately that fitted."

"And so, Miss Rowe, you set the example to my servants and pupils of trying locks and fitting wrong keys into doors," said the Principal coldly. "You have been guilty of a bitter want of prudence, if of nothing worse. But it is time for prayers. You had better return to the classroom; I will follow you in a few moments."

And with scowling brow and lowering face the governess went out, and left the harassed schoolmistress alone to think over this latest subject of annoyance. Poor thing! It did seem hard

that whilst paying three resident governesses, all of them as old as she was when she began schoolkeeping, she could yet never venture to allow herself a little relaxation during the term without feeling almost certain to have to pay dearly for it, by learning of some mischance when she returned home that had occurred during her absence.

The last time she spent an evening out that delicate girl, Lucy Wenckworth, had been allowed to laugh and cry herself into hysterics because a mischievous companion had hidden a toad in her desk. The time before that poor Josephine had been left so long alone in the little class-room poring over her books that she had fallen asleep with the candle before her, and only woke up when a great lock of hair was burnt off one side of her head, making her look a perfect sight for months to come.

"Yes," thought the hard-worked schoolkeeper, "it certainly does seem to be the fact that, excepting during the month at Christmas and the six weeks at summer, I ought never to leave the house. For if I only go for a walk I generally find that the servants have got into some mischief, half-cut their fingers off, or broken all the plates, or cracked a dozen of the tumblers,

or dropped a spoon down the well, or quarrelled, so that they are determined not to stop in the house with each other, or something. There's sure to be something; and now there is this! Oh dear!"

That sigh came from the very depths of a sorely oppressed heart. People said that Miss Crofton was making money, and so she was. She had need make money, for she had taken upon herself to support the three orphan children of a dead brother and their invalid mother. And if her school income failed her they must all be reduced to beggary. But she sometimes felt as though picking oakum, without cares, in the workhouse would be preferable to this life of ceaseless harass and anxiety.

And how little any one sympathised with her! If she were weary, or quiet, or dull at meals or in the drawing-room in the evening, her pupils considered her cross and disagreeable, and were secretly conscious that she was not doing her duty by them. If she forced pleasant looks upstairs, and vented some of her troubled feelings downstairs, in sterner inspection or sharper orders than usual, there were barely smothered growls as to people being sugar in sitting-rooms and vinegar in the kitchen; and if she had

occasion to complain of the way in which classes were held or any other duties performed by her masters or governesses, faces said as plainly as tongues could have done that it was all very fine to be in command, and have the liberty of finding fault ; that was easy work ; it was a pity that the tables could not have been turned sometimes.

The Principal of Crofton House most earnestly wished, as she sat there cogitating in her private sitting-room over the tale she had just been told, that she could change places for twenty-four hours with either the pupil or the governess, who had brought this present coil upon her. But those kind of transformations unfortunately only occur in dreams, and so, rising somewhat wearily from her seat, she went into prayers, and for her own private prayer prayed that she might be helped through the difficulties brought her by the quarrels of these two undisciplined spirits.

Prayers ended, the Principal and her English governess accompanied the two girls who shared Helen Edison's room upstairs. Miss Crofton determined to make an effort to get the affair settled at once. Perhaps, tired out by her loneliness, darkness, and the lateness of the hour, the

stubborn pupil might be more easily won to gain speedy rest and quietness by begging pardon for her impertinence than at another time. At any rate, it was worth the trial.

But, worth or not, it was not made. When the door was softly unlocked by Miss Rowe, out of no regard to the prisoner, but following her lately cherished instincts as a spy, for some moments every one stared blankly at each other, thinking the bird was flown.

The Principal moved the lamp she held, and raised it above her head as she looked round the room, and suddenly its light flashed on to a little white hand lying on a counterpane.

"Why! she is in bed, and—asleep!" said Clara Boswell, in low tones, as she ran softly across the floor.

"Yes, she is asleep," repeated Miss Crofton, bending over her refractory pupil with a strangely tender smile, and then, kissing the lovely forehead, she turned away, and bidding the other girls to be kindly quiet in getting to bed, she signed to the English governess to follow her, and left the room.

CHAPTER XIX.

JOSEPHINE HOLDS THE SCALES.

ON leaving the sleeping Helen Edison, the Principal of Crofton Hall turned to her young governess, saying, rather sternly, "We must wait until to-morrow, Miss Rowe, to administer any reprimands; and I cannot help hoping that by that time you, as the elder and wiser, will be willing to pave the way for Miss Edison's apologies, by telling her that you do not mind confessing in your turn that you were rather needlessly hasty and harsh with her."

"*That* I shall never do!" said the English governess in a low, fierce tone, that quite startled her companion, and the two separated without even exchanging good-nights.

And here we must go back a little to explain how matters had come to this present terrible pass.

It must be confessed that the state of feeling between pupil and teacher had been increasingly

embittered by Helen's sympathies for poor Josephine, sympathies which had been still further outraged by a needless display of what looked very much like petty spite on the part of Miss Rowe, but a few days before this last and worst quarrel.

Helen had secured her favourite seat at the evening meal between Josephine Bell and Milly Wilmot, and after studying Josephine's face for a few moments she said, with a little air of loving triumph, "Now confess the truth, Josephine; don't you feel ever so much better for having been out of doors this afternoon instead of poring over your books all the while?"

Josephine was eating bread and butter with far more appetite than she had shown for it lately. But at her companion's question her face grew overcast, and she murmured, "But I haven't a quarter done my French, and I haven't looked at any spelling, and just now Miss——"

Josephine suddenly checked herself, and tried to check Milly also, who was proceeding to finish her sentence for her. But Helen's "Tell me, Mill," was stronger than Josephine's, "Please don't," and so Milly told how Miss Rowe had stopped Josephine five minutes ago, as they were coming in to tea together, to say that for the

future she should be obliged to hear her repeat that lesson with Rose, as she had not time to hear her separately."

"She is a regular inquisition wretch," muttered Helen fiercely. "What a queer expression!" said Milly, laughing. "And was spelling one of the tortures of the Inquisition?"

"Hurting people's feelings out of spite was," retorted Helen.

"I don't really believe that this time she had anything to do with spite at all," said Josephine, in a low tone. "It was not spoken as though she were cross, but more as if she were really anxious to save a few minutes. And you remember it has been her own leisure in a sort of way that she has given up to me."

"Oh, there, do leave off," interrupted Helen irritably. "It makes me in a worse rage than ever to hear you always making excuses for her, when she has nothing but hardness and disagreeableness for you. And, besides, I can't help feeling as if you were something of a hypocrite; for you may try to persuade me as much as you like, but I don't believe a bit the more that any but very old people, or people just going to die, ever manage to fancy they like those who are horrid to them."

"*Fancying* it wouldn't be much use," murmured Josephine.

"No; of course not. So it is much better to be honest, and let it alone altogether. If people slap me on one cheek there is certainly a second slap to follow; but it's not on *my* cheek, and if you would be guided by me, it would not be for you to have the two either."

"In this matter I have a wiser guide than you," said Josephine, in a tone of unaccustomed firmness; and then the bell rang as the signal for rising from tea, and Helen hastened away to pass the fifteen minutes' interval before preparation-time in proving to Milly, and half a dozen other sceptical companions, that her leap over the two back-to-back chairs was not to be an exceptional achievement.

Josephine went off to the little study to learn her spelling, but when she had found the book she held it upside down, and gazed at it with unseeing eyes. She was thinking of her brilliant, talented schoolfellow. Hitherto she had thought of her with unmixed admiration and fondness, with just a faint tinge added of almost irrepresentable envy for her talents, courage, and confidence. But as the poor, contemptuously pitied, lustreless pupil sat in the darkening, dull little room alone,

with her upside-down spelling-book in her hand, she was not envying her companion, she was not admiring her. She was pitying her. Strange and impossible as Helen would have supposed it, she was being pitied by "poor Josephine." Beauty, talent, strength, chivalry, high-spirited generosity, were all very fair things in the sight of Josephine, but they were as nothing to her if they were to be weighed in the balance with that most wonderful assurance, "Ye are my friends." Dead leaves beside pearls. Josephine had the pearls. Not for all the splendour of the world, not for all the genius of men, would Josephine have given up that Friend, the Friend who says to those who love Him, "As my Father hath loved me, so have I loved you."

CHAPTER XX.

MISS ROWE CHOOSES A CONFIDANTE.

HALF AN HOUR later Josephine Bell was sitting, with her hand up to a miserably puzzled head, between Helen Edison and Milly Wilmot in the large class-room, and trying to master her French exercise. Helen and Milly had secretly despatched little Rosie to beg her to leave her solitude and join them.

"Even if the lynx won't let us help her," Helen had said, "it will, at any rate, be much better for her not to be so much alone."

With this assertion Milly had heartily agreed by the quotation, "Them's my sentiments," and then Rosie had been despatched on her errand, and returned triumphantly with her sister. But, so far, any benefit Josephine might have reaped from the change was certainly restricted to that which she considered the questionable one of companionship, for "the lynx,"

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otherwise Miss Rowe, had kept a close watch upon the trio of friends ever since she had been surprised by the entrance of the two sisters.

"Go to Miss Rowe, and make her have the trouble of helping you herself," whispered Helen once, "as she won't let us."

"But I can never understand her explanations; they are too quick," sighed Josephine.

Nevertheless she rose and carried her book to the end of the room, only to come back five minutes after, feeling that the difficulties were even more complicated than she had before thought them; and Helen looked at her as she sat with her tired, troubled head on her hand, and as she looked her thoughts gradually faded away from her lessons and passed back to the strange expression of rapt sweetness which she had seen earlier in the day on that plain, weary face. At last she muttered, in a tone inaudible even to Rose Trew, her neighbour on the other side, "Josie, I cannot understand you. If you really meant what you said this afternoon about the happiness of that other learning, how can you bother yourself so dreadfully about this, which, from your point of view, must seem nothing but so much rubbish?"

For some moments Josephine made no answer.

Then she murmured, "'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.' And while I am here it is my duty to do what my father has placed me here to work at."

A minute later she added, "Besides, I don't think any of God's gifts rubbish. Some are greater and grander than others, but all are fair and good; and one of the choicest of earthly gifts, I think, is that of learning."

Unconsciously Josephine pronounced the last words in her natural tone, and a painful flush mounted to her temples as a mocking laugh from the end of the room accompanied the unlooked-for reply.

"You are no doubt aware, Miss Bell, that there is a fine for speaking in this room during the preparation hours, but you spoke so like a book that I must really let you off. I should never have imagined that you held learning in such high esteem. It is a pity that you do not contrive to appropriate a little more of the gift to yourself."

"I do try," was the simple answer. But there was such a ring of sadness in the words, that even Miss Rowe was touched by their patient humility. A tinge of compunction came into her own cheeks, and she bent her head quickly over some needlework. Helen Edison glanced at

her curiously, and the thought crept into her mind that Josephine's learning had given her a power which she, with all her cleverness, did not possess. It was true that she could have made Miss Rowe flame out into furious looks and sinfully angry words, but she could not do as Josephine had done—make her bend her head in penitence.

After a lapse of two or three minutes Miss Rowe rose, and came round to where the poor over-anxious student sat vainly trying to master her task. Helen scarcely recognised the governess's voice as she said, quietly, "You have not got on very far, I see. I am afraid you did not understand my explanation much better than that of the book."

"I am so sorry," said Josephine earnestly; "I wish I gave you less trouble."

"I shall not so much mind the trouble in the future, if you really mean you do care to get on," half muttered the young governess, as though she were ashamed of her own unusual graciousness. In a few moments she added, but rather in excuse for the present than the past, "I thought you looked upon learning as disagreeable, useless drudgery, only to be got through because you could not help yourself.

"Since you really recognise its value, I shall be far more willing to give you aid. Carry your books over there to the desk, and I will join you in a minute."

The minute's interval which Miss Rowe claimed was devoted to snatching up Helen Edison's exercise-book, and sharply tearing two of its pages across, which Helen had just profusely adorned with climbing monkeys, fighting cats, snakes, worms, and snails.

"It is better to have no talents than to pervert them," she said in her most dictatorial tone. "Miss Boswell, you will see that Miss Edison pays a fine for a babyish waste of preparation-time."

"It was no waste at all," retorted Helen; "I have done all my lessons; and I will ask the Principal if, under those circumstances, it is wrong to practise my drawing. To-morrow I will fill a page with spiteful toads; I shall not have far to search for a model."

A flash darted from Miss Rowe's eyes, and she raised her hand. Happily on that occasion she restrained herself in time, and vouchsafing no answer to the impertinent speech she marched off to Josephine, not certainly in such an amiable mood as when she proffered her assistance, but

still disposed enough to render it for her promise' sake, and for yet another reason also. The young governess was sorely in need of a confidante to whom she might pour out the tale of a sudden grief that had fallen upon her, and during the last few minutes she felt that the despised, dim-eyed, ignorant pupil was just exactly the sort of confidante that she should choose—humble, gentle-hearted, unobtrusive, easily put aside again.

In any and every possible trouble that could have affected herself alone Miss Rowe would have stood apart, if her heart had broken in so doing. But the trouble that had now fallen upon her, since that morning's post came in, was not one that she could, in her pride, claim to bear alone; and from its very nature it had a softening influence upon her in some measure, at any rate at first, and her soul cried out for sympathy. She had no Heavenly Father to go to, no Comforter, no all-powerful Friend, and so she turned to Josephine.

The preparation hour came to an end before Josephine's exercise was finished, and all her companions dispersed, Milly whispering as they went off, "Miss Rowe really is taking pains to make things clear to poor Josephine now."

"Why couldn't she do so before?" growled Helen; but even she half forgave her own torn exercise-book as she glanced at Miss Bell's relieved expression of countenance, and heard the patient tones in which the English governess was giving explanations about a lesson with which there was no real need that she should concern herself at all.

"Isn't Miss Rowe kind to-night?" murmured little Rose, clasping her hands fondly round the arm of her very dear new friend.

"Humph! Not quite such a snarling hyena as usual," assented Miss Nellie, and then she let herself be pulled off by little Rose to a special favourite bench in a deep recess in the wide hall, and prepared obediently to finish a fairy tale, of a particularly weird description, begun the previous day.

CHAPTER XXI.

HER LITTLE BROTHER.

MEANTIME the French exercise came to an end, and to a far more satisfactory one than had ever yet been the case with Josephine ; and, forgetting the cruel insult of the order given as they were all going in to tea, and the sneering laugh of half an hour since, she raised her eyes with true gratitude to her companion, saying, "I have never understood a lesson so well before. You have been very good to me. I wish I could do anything for you, you look so tired to-day."

For some moments there was silence. "You have been very good to me." Those words struck to the young teacher's heart with a keenness of reproof she had never felt in her life before. They were uttered most truthfully, but they were most false.

Good indeed ! For the past two months she had added to the girl's sorrowful sense of her own feeble intellect by every cutting taunt or

show of contemptuous indifference that had occurred to her, and now she had condescended to aid the girl in her dunce-like difficulties because an unaccustomed sense of loneliness caused a wish for sympathy that she could demand as she chose, and cast off when it bothered her! Was that being good?

And the offer of the sympathy came so readily, and the sympathy itself—"You look so tired to-day." A sense of shame and unworthiness came over Emily Rowe as she sat there silent. She had added to the girl's tiredness many times, and in the secrecy of her heart she felt that there was a meanness doubly great in purposing to glean even a crumb of comfort from her. But Josephine sat there, so still, so patient, so meek, so utterly forgetful of self, only so sorry that one of her fellow-creatures, the least kind of them all so far as she was concerned, should be so tired. And Emily Rowe's yearning for that crumb of comfort grew too strong to be resisted.

At last she took a letter from her pocket, and saying hastily, and in a low tone, "I am not tired, but I am very miserable," she put it into her pupil's hands.

Josephine looked puzzled for a moment; she

did not understand ; and with a touch of her usual impatience with dulness, Miss Rowe snatched it back, drew the letter from its envelope, and then returned it, saying, "There ; you can read, you know."

"Oh yes, I can read," said Josephine, in a quick tone of apology ; and making no further delay in proving the statement, she opened the sheet and began to peruse the contents, Miss Rowe watching her the while. Five seconds had scarcely passed, however, before sighs burst from the lips of both of them almost simultaneously, and Josephine raised eyes full of tears to her companion.

"Poor, noble little fellow !" said Josephine, instinctively stretching out one of her hands and laying it on that of the governess.

For an answer Miss Rowe uttered a second contented sigh as she murmured, as though to herself, "I thought I was right. I thought you would know just what to say in this sort of thing."

And then Josephine finished the letter, and the two sat there together silent for some time.

"Shall you not go home to help nurse him ?" asked Josephine at length softly.

"How can I ?" was the sharp-toned question. Then, recollecting herself—"I can't. We are poor—poor as church mice, if you know what

that means. There will be little enough but dry bread for my mother as it is now, Harry will need so many extra luxuries. And unless he is to have the parish doctor, I must earn my quarter's salary to pay one for him."

"I—I have—plenty of——" began Josephine, timidly, earnestly. And then she stopped, and pretended to be busy once more with the letter, while heavy tears dropped on to it.

"Hush, hush, don't cry; you must not for my trouble," said Miss Rowe hurriedly. "I ought not to have worried you with it. Only it is some comfort to feel there is some one feeling a little sorry for one's grief."

"If only I could help you," said Josephine. "If only you would let me. My money is no good to me; could you not let it be some good to—to—to—your little brother? You see, your mother says he moans for you even in his sleep."

The young governess caught back a sob and stifled it, and then muttered, hardly, "And so he will have to moan, if he means to moan for me, till Easter comes."

"That is nearly three weeks."

"Yes. And if it was nearly three years it would have to be the same. And you know as well as I do that I cannot take your money."

But I am glad to have you know about poor little Harry. You had better go now. Don't talk of this to any one else."

"No," murmured Josephine absently, as she rose. And then, with her usual awkward, shuffling movements, she left the room. Miss Rowe looked after her till she had disappeared, and then her eyes fell back upon the letter with a hard expression in them as she muttered,

"If the pain and weakness had fallen upon me, one might have seen some justice in it—at least, no doubt mother would have done so; but upon poor little Harry, where can be the love and mercy that afflicts him so heavily, I should like to know? And as a reward, too, for his noble, brave, self-forgetfulness!"

At this last thought her cheeks glowed with pride as well as love for her little ten-year-old brother, who by a deed of true heroism had brought himself to the verge of brain fever, and so she dismissed all dwelling upon Josephine Bell's last words; otherwise her thoughts might have led her to remember that matters would have been decidedly worse if they had been arranged according to her ideas of mercy, and she, the main breadwinner of the family, had been laid upon a helpless and expensive bed of sickness.

Josephine went up to her own room, and with simple words and childish phrases, but a most earnest heart, prayed to the One great, omnipotent, all-knowing Father, that He would watch by the fever-bed of little stricken Harry Rowe, strengthen the loving mother who wrote in a tone of such sad but patient faith, and comfort "poor Miss Rowe."

Yes, it was poor Josephine's turn now to apply the epithet "poor" to some one; but there was no touch of contempt in her breathing of the word. Nor was there any thought of triumph that the highly accomplished, imperious teacher should have been brought to seek comfort from her—the heartily despised pupil. She did certainly wonder for a little while how she came to be the chosen confidante, but her humility led her to a tolerably fair solution of that mystery.

"She knew I am not clever enough to tease her with a lot of talking," she murmured as she rose from her knees. "And it is bad to have to listen to that, even from the best and kindest people, just at the beginning of a trouble, when it seems almost easier to think it is as bad as ever it can be, than to be made to see and confess that there is a bright side to it."

CHAPTER XXII.

FREE TRADE IN SWEETMEATS.

"AND so, you see, not any way can I get a letter from India on my birthday," and with this piece of information little Rose heaved a prodigious sigh, and gazed with her big blue eyes out of the hall window, as if she had some half hope that one of Helen Edison's fairy birds might fly through it, and give her a welcome contradiction.

But instead of a fairy bird flying in at the window, her sister Josephine came to her down the stairs, and, stooping over her, kissed her fondly. The child returned the caress with interest, saying, "O Josie! Helen has been telling me such a most loveliest of a lovely fairy tale! I wish you had heard it."

"So do I," said Josephine. "It seems to me that Helen is always showing us kindness of some sort."

"Nonsense," laughed Helen merrily. "Rosie

is the most delicious excuse to me for being idle ever so often. I owe her a bushelf of gratitude for happening to be here now. But where have you been all this time?"

"Writing my French exercise with Miss Rowe."

"What! all this long while? How——"

"No; not all this while," hastily interrupted Josephine. "We have been having a chat."

"Oh! Then I hope Miss Rowe has been begging your pardon for all her impertinence to you of late—horrid old thing!" was the answer, as Helen drew her head back to escape the hand which Josephine tried to lay over her lips.

"Helen, Helen," she remonstrated, in grieved tones, "you should not say such things—indeed you should not. You are beginning to gain great influence in the school, and you do not know how much harm you may do. And you have such a wonderful power for doing good."

"Glad to hear it," was the offhand retort. "I hope I shall be able to make laudable use of the said power in making the vixen's life a burden to her."

"Miss Rowe is in great trouble just now," said Josephine, in a low, pleading tone.

But Helen was in no mood just then to be touched by anything into pity or penitence.

"Glad to hear it," she said again. "Hope it will do her good. She's made me waste six-pennyworth of stamps resticking those lovely drawings of mine together. Look there."

Helen lifted from the seat beside her the two pages Miss Rowe had torn up, now neatly joined together again by little strips of stamps.

"If you were determined upon such a useless piece of work, why did you not use your gum and a sheet of paper, instead of wasting all these stamps?" asked Josephine, as much in wonder as reproach.

"Couldn't get the cork out of the bottle."

"You didn't try *very* long," half-whispered Rosie slyly.

"No, certainly not very long," assented Helen calmly. "The cork stuck, though, and I had these handy. Besides it's not waste, you know. I've made a sort of gift to the Government, and my side is in just now. Mamma's for the others, but papa and I are Liberals."

"Are what?" cried Milly Wilmot, coming up to the group at this moment and catching the last words. "Whatever rubbish are you talking now? And as for liberal, indeed, I know some-

body who bought a whole shilling's worth of sweets yesterday, and hasn't given me a mite; I don't call that very liberal."

"I don't know. It might be Liberal-Conservative," was the retort, with a laughing gleam in the bright eyes. "But at present Miss Crofton is the Conservative. She met Jem yesterday, and made spoil of my treasures for my good. Suppose we four get up a bread riot, and claim them back. I'll head the mob."

"I'll follow you," cried Milly, laughing.

"And I won't," said Josephine, smiling, but very decidedly holding back.

Little Rose looked with doubtful entreaty at her sister. "Yes, dear, you may go with them if you like," said Josephine.

Even Helen's audacity failed her for a moment or two when she reached Miss Crofton's door, and she stood with hands hanging down, hesitating whether to rap or retreat.

"Be quick!" said Milly.

"All right," was the answer, and the next instant the quick decided tap had been given that had of late become so familiar to the Principal's ears.

"Come in," was called from within the room. But again Helen hesitated, and Miss Crofton,

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who happened to be standing near the door, stepped forward and opened it herself.

"Why, my dears, what is it?" she asked in surprise, gazing at her three rosy-faced pupils. "What have you come about? Is anything the matter?"

"N—no. Nothing is the matter, Madam," began Helen, the curving lips beginning obstinately to curl up into a suspicion of a smile. "The thing is, we have—have been thinking about politics and free trade, and—those sorts of things. And—we think free trade is—nicest. Don't you?"

And then Miss Nellie lifted her long lashes and raised her great eyes to those of the school-mistress, which were filled with a look of most utter bewilderment. She put her arm round Rosa Bell and drew her to her as she asked, "Can you tell me, little one, what this very funny companion of yours has come about?"

"I think," whispered Rosie, "I think about her sweets."

"About her——" repeated Miss Crofton doubtfully. And then, as memory flashed its light into her mind, her lips too curved into a smile, which speedily gave way to a hearty laugh.

"You impudent child! How dare you come to me like this?" she asked, turning to Helen.

"Because you are so kind. I like having things to come to you about. I dare do anything for that, but—vex you."

The schoolmistress bent and kissed her sweet-voiced young pupil.

"But you do approve of free trade, don't you?" was the question again the next moment, and, whether Miss Crofton did or not, the three schoolfellows very shortly after marched off in triumph with the packets of lemon-drops and hard bake.

"There will be at least a dozen of us, dear Madam, to share it amongst," said Helen, reassuringly; "and I promise never to buy any more here without asking you first."

"And do not ask me too often," said Miss Crofton, with an implied admission of weakness which made her pupil look up at her with laughing triumph in her eyes.

When Rosa Bell had run off to bed, carrying with her a Benjamin's portion of the sweetmeats, Helen again sought out Josephine and had a long chat with her about the little girl's approaching birthday, to which she was not looking forward with any especial hopefulness. All the

child's birthdays hitherto had been spent with most loving parents, who had taken pains to make each anniversary a joyous and memorable festival; and the poor little girl had found it a hard matter to keep back her sobs, as she told her sympathising schoolfellow that she had to forego even the hope of getting letters from her father and mother on this coming birthday, which, for the first time, was to be spent at school.

"At any rate something shall be done for poor wee Rosie," said Helen resolutely, and feeling strongly indignant with the Indian mails and circumstances generally. But even as she spoke various plans occurred to her by which Rose's doleful anticipations should be pleasantly disappointed.

The following afternoon the two sisters unexpectedly started off on a few days' visit to some acquaintances just arrived from Calcutta, and settled for some weeks about fifty miles from Crofton House, after which they talked of going to the North of Scotland for eight months, when they were to return to the neighbourhood of the Bells in India. This was the only opportunity the Jansons would have of carrying back personal intelligence to their neighbours of their daughters'

welfare, and they kindly availed themselves of it, according to their promise.

"I wish I were you," sighed Miss Rowe enviously, when Josephine sought her to tell of the invitation Miss Crofton had just delivered. "I don't suppose you much care to go to Saffron-Walden; but for me, I would give my all to go there at the present time for a few days."

Josephine looked at her inquiringly and with sudden interest. "Is it near your home, then?"

"My home is in it. Poor little Harry is lying tossing in his bed a very little distance from the fine old church. But there, you had better go and pack up now. You have not too much time. Can I help you?"

"Oh no, thank you, there is very little to do," said Josephine gratefully, as she went away to her own room, thinking how much she wished that she could teach Helen one or two simple lessons, but harder to learn, perhaps, than she quite understood. At any rate, Helen Edison did not learn them then; nor had she when she lay sleeping with Miss Rowe's wrathful face bent over her, beside the Principal's, the night before Rosa Bell's birthday; to which date we now once more return.

CHAPTER XXIII.

WAR AND PEACE.

FOUR clear strokes rang out from the church clock on the hill. It was a dark night, although the stars were doing their best to brighten the aspect of affairs out of doors; but they were of little service in lighting up the rooms of Crofton House, and so thought Helen Edison as she stood trying to peer into one of the drawers of her chest, which she had just softly opened.

The night was very dark and the house was very still, and probably every one in it was asleep but Helen. However, considering how early she had betaken herself to bed, it was little wonder that she awoke proportionably early. Besides, she had made up her mind to awake early, and, strange as it always seems to me that it should be so, it is, nevertheless, a fact that making up one's mind overnight is more efficacious than any number of alarm-bells, or promises from other people.

Helen was bent upon making little Rosie's birthday a happy one for her, and she depended, in a large measure, for doing this upon the presents she had provided. But no one could tell, as Helen informed herself, now that she was in disgrace, how matters might go when the morning came, and whether Miss Rowe might not manage to prevent the pleasant giving of the gifts at all if she had the power.

"But she shan't," muttered Nellie resolutely; and so at four o'clock on that 31st of March she stood peering into the drawer that held the treasures, trying to see how to lift the doll without tumbling its delicate garments. Then she had to lay it and the remainder of its wardrobe, together with several other small articles, in a shawl, that she might be able to carry all at once, for she dare not risk two journeys past the English governess's room. Once during her arrangements Clara Boswell's regular breathing stopped, and she murmured, "Who's there?"

But she was speaking almost in her sleep, and was soon quiet again, and Helen quickly and lightly left the room, and flew like a slim shadowy ghost to the second door down the corridor. Here she had to pause again and deposit her long burden on the floor while she

turned the handle. Very cautiously she pushed the door open and looked in. It was half-past four now; Josephine's blinds were all up, and a faint twilight was peering into the darkness. The occupants of the two little beds were very sound asleep.

Helen unceremoniously deposited two sets of neatly folded clothes, which she found on two chairs, on the floor, and then, placing the two chairs seat to seat beside Rose's bed, she proceeded to drape them with her shawl and arrange her gifts upon them—the doll in the centre, at its head a couple of boxes of bonbons, at its feet a box of minute gold-edged notepaper and envelopes, surrounded by the most brilliant of crackers, and the remainder of the doll's clothes hung over the back. While the soft little white hands made these arrangements there was a soft, sweet smile on the lovely young face. It looked so loving and innocent and gentle that most people would have found it difficult to believe that but a few short hours before it had been flung back with burning cheeks and blazing eyes, while passionate words poured from those rosy lips. Now the rosy lips were waiting most eagerly to utter the most affectionate good wishes.

Everything disposed according to her taste, Helen seated herself on the end of the child's bed and patiently waited for the clock to strike five. "It could not hurt her for once in her life to be awakened at that hour," Helen had decided, seeing she went to bed so early.

The minutes seemed very long. Several times Helen thought that the hour must have sounded without her hearing it. But at last patience was rewarded. The first stroke was wafted from the hill. Helen counted the five, and then, bending forward quickly, she bestowed three very firm kisses upon her little schoolfellow's mouth, whispering between each, "It's only I, Rosie darling."

"Who's I?" gasped the bewildered, drowsy child, after the last smothering kiss and accompanying assurance.

"Why, Helen, of course," was the answer, with a little ghost of a laugh. "But hush, you must not wake anybody, or I shall get into a fuss again, you know, for being here. I've only come to wish you a whole bushful of many happy returns of the day, and to bring you these things. Look at them."

Rose was awake now, and she started up and turned towards the chairs. Her companion was

only just in time to clap her hand over her mouth to prevent such a shout escaping as must have aroused not only Josephine but most other people in the house, or, at any rate, on that side of it. Ten minutes later Helen got into her own bed again with a contented mind.

CHAPTER XXIV.

ONLY IN TIME TO BE TOO LATE.

SEVEN o'clock struck, the "getting-up" time for the pupils from the 1st of November to the end of March. There was a rap at the door, and a simultaneous cry from three voices of "Come in."

The servant entered with the cans of hot water, and having deposited them she stepped to Helen's bed and presented her with a note, with the words, "From Madam, Miss."

Helen tore it open with her usual impetuosity, glanced over it, and bounded out of bed. Clapping her hands above her head and singing, "Too late, hurrah, too late!" she danced about the room till Milly declared she believed the yesterday's starvation had driven her crazy.

At last Clara Boswell caught hold of her and held her fast while she asked, "What has happened now, you wild Indian of a girl? What is too late?"

"Look and see," said Helen, laughing, as she

held the note before her schoolfellow's eyes.
 "Read that."

And Clara did read it, and was more puzzled than before, as well she might be. The note was as follows, very short and stiff:—

"MY DEAR MISS EDISON,—Under present circumstances, I feel compelled to forbid you the pleasure of giving any birthday presents to Rose Bell with your own hands. Whether I can allow her to receive them from you at all must depend upon your conduct this morning.

"Yours in much grief, and anxiety for your future,
 SYBILLA CROFTON."

"Well!" ejaculated Clara Boswell in astonished interrogation, when she had read these words through for the third time in the vain endeavour to find any key in them for her companion's wild glee; "well, I do not see anything very cheering or delightful in this. Dear Miss Crofton greatly troubled——"

"Yes," interjected Helen, her face clouding for a moment. "That's bad, certainly. I'm horribly sorry for that, of course. But go on; what were you going to say next?"

"Why, next, your own kind hopes and works of the past three or four days are disappointed——"

"Are they, though?" murmured Helen, be-

ginning to smile again. Clara stared, and so did Milly Wilmot. But Clara continued, "And then—worst of all, in one sense—perhaps poor little Rose will get none of those gifts after all, which would have so brightened up——"

But at this point, for the third time, Helen interrupted her. Bursting into a peal of the most triumphant laughter and breaking away from her captor, she shouted, "Ah! but perhaps, and for certain, your perhaps goes for nothing, my lady fair. She's got them, Clara, she's got them! Every one of them! Oh, how delicious that I thought of that plan, and that I woke up in time to carry it out! Rose has got the doll, and the bonbons, and the notepaper, and everything, and I gave them to her my very own self at five o'clock this morning, and got, oh! such a heap of kisses and dear little dimples in return, that I feel set up against all the horrid old Rowses in——"

"Take that, you impertinent girl!" cried a voice choking with passion, as the sound of a heavy box on the ears fell through the room, followed for an instant by a dead silence.

While Helen was explaining everything the door opened, unperceived by any of the three preoccupied inmates. Mademoiselle had told Miss Rowe over-night, with tears in her eyes,

of the prohibitory note Miss Crofton had decided to write Helen to stop her giving the presents before she had spoken with her, and so far from sharing the kind-hearted little Frenchwoman's sympathetic sorrow, she had slept with greatly soothed feelings from the intelligence. Then she heard laughter and merry voices in the adjoining room directly after they were called in the morning, and her floor shook from the vibration of the next one.

How dared they be joyous in there with the culprit! She stopped midway in her toilette, slipped on her dressing-gown, and quietly entered the next room in time to hear that her hopes for her hated pupil's disappointment were baffled. Then came the impertinent allusion to herself, and then—that blow.

The silence that followed, almost instantaneous as it was, was terrible; then Helen started round with a fierce look in her eyes and uplifted hand. As suddenly as it was raised it fell again.

"No," she said, "I don't *fight*. I don't use my fists like a navvy or a fishwoman. I am a lady."

The look in the eyes now, and the tones of the low, constrained voice, expressed such measureless scorn that the antagonist shrank before that set, white young face. There was a pause, and

Helen added, "I should think you had better go now, unless you carry your malice so far as to wish to kill me with cold."

Almost mechanically Miss Rowe went towards the door, and as she passed through the same resolutely constrained young voice followed her with the words, "Remember, you will have to beg my pardon for that blow."

Passing her own room the young governess went on to that of the Bells with a half-defined purpose of claiming back the toys from poor little Rose, and telling her that Miss Crofton did not choose to let her have them. She rapped hastily at the door, and before she could turn the handle the child herself opened it, the beautiful doll in her arms, her rosebud of a face full of dimples.

"O Miss Rowe!" she cried, joyously, "do come and see all my delicious, delightful things! And I have got something for dear, dear, dear little Harry, too! Do look, please."

"Another time, child, another time," was the hurried answer. "Many happy returns of the day to you. I must go now; I am not dressed, you see, and the prayer-bell will ring in a few minutes."

And Miss Rowe turned abruptly and went back to her own room, a second time discomfited.

Rose pushed her sister gently down on to her bed, climbed on to her lap, and, cheek to cheek, murmured, happily, "Josie, my prayers will have to be all praises to-day, I think."

"I often feel like that, sissy darling," whispered back the other, and especially when I thank our Father for giving me such a very precious, dear little blessing as you are."

"Mamma called me her little blessing," whispered back the child, "when she said that last good-bye on board the ship. O Josephine! I wish the years would soon pass, that we might be all together again!"

"Yes, darling. Won't it be a happy part of being in heaven, that there we shall be together, never, never again to part?"

"Yes, Pheenie, yes; I often think of that beautiful thing. But, Pheenie, should I *want* to go there just yet?"

"No, sissy darling; no, of course not until you are called there," was the answer, as the elder sister strained the blooming child in her arms. But a scarcely audible sigh followed the answer, that seemed to have a faint echo of a tired longing in it, and the words floated through the slow brain, "Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ."

CHAPTER XXV.

A SURPRISE.

"HELEN, could you spare a short time to come with me to the little study?" It was Josephine who spoke, just as they were leaving the dining-hall after tea on little Rose's birthday.

There were no smiles on Helen Edison's face now, and she hesitated slightly as she answered, "I meant to give what little time I have to spare to-night to telling Rosie a story."

"Ah! please let me tell you one instead," said Josephine, very anxiously. "Rose shall come with us, and get her doll ready for bed. Besides, I think she will like to hear the story I have to tell you to-night even better for once than a fairy tale."

Helen allowed herself to be drawn on till they were apart from all the other girls, and then once more she stood still, and facing her school-fellow with something of a sullen expression on

her face, she said doggedly, "Look here, Josephine, I'm sorry to hurt your feelings, or to vex you in any way, but I had better tell you at once that it will be no good your trying to scold me now, or attempting to read me a lecture, for I am in no humour for it, and won't listen."

"I know," said Josephine, with a mingling in her voice of sadness and gentleness. "I am not thinking of preaching, or of scolding you. I only want to tell you something about a poor little boy Rose and I saw while we were away last week. I should like to interest you in his case."

"Oh! certainly I'll listen to anything of that sort you like to tell me. That's quite another matter. Is the little boy's case anything that papa can help in, do you suppose?"

"I don't know; I am afraid not. But you will be better able to judge when I have told you his short history."

And so saying Josephine Bell ushered her two companions into the little study specially appropriated to her own use after the morning classes were over, day by day.

Beside the fireplace was a tiny horse-hair sofa, and on this Josephine and Helen seated themselves; little Rose established herself on Helen's lap with a very earnest face, and the narrative

began. Before repeating it I must pause to remark that the present state of affairs at Crofton House was very dreary.

There had been a terrible scene that morning. After prayers, which had been an unhappy mockery for two of the party, Miss Crofton had detained every one but the servants, and then gone over the facts, so far as she knew them, of yesterday's disturbance. Having done so without interruption from any one, she had concluded earnestly—

“But I hope that the next five minutes will see the end of this cloud, and that we shall have clear skies once more. There is not one here that cannot understand that without patience on both sides, and submission to authority on the part of the pupils, no establishment of this kind can be well regulated. You, I am sure, Miss Edison, will by now have seen this, and will be willing to acknowledge it. To make your apologies to Miss Rowe the easier, in consideration of your yesterday's punishment, I may add that in some sort they will be also made to me, seeing that during my absence from home Miss Rowe is, as you are aware, my representative.”

Helen started to her feet with crimson cheeks,

and exclaimed, "Don't say so, Madam! Don't claim a spy for your representative!—you, who are so frank and straightforward that we all, down to little Rose, learn to respect you as much as we love you! Do you think that you could have ever made yourself tell a little child to sneak softly into a room that she might *find out* what her companion was about? No, you know that you could not."

That was the first the Principal had heard of the order to little Rosa Bell. And then she heard also of that box on the ears. And Helen had ended up with, "When Miss Rowe has begged my pardon for that insult, I will beg hers for some portion of what I said, but I cannot do so before."

After that no one knew exactly what had happened. There was a confused memory of Miss Crofton, in a tone of shocked astonishment, asking her young subordinate if she admitted the accusation. There was an indistinct recollection of a sharp, fierce answer from Miss Rowe that she had a good mind to repeat the blow there and then, not once but several times, and then all remembered the sudden lull that had fallen on the storm for a few moments, to be followed by the young governess suddenly com-

ing forward and saying, in cold, slow tones, "After this, Madam, it may be as well that I should let you know that my services are greatly required at home. I will leave to-night."

"Well," said Miss Crofton, heavily, "perhaps it will be well."



And then, without a glance at Helen Edison, she had gone, and the girls had all trooped off to the breakfast that had been awaiting them nearly half an hour. Mademoiselle had to take the head of the table, for the English governess had gone up to her own room, locked herself in,

and refused to come down. She remained there all day, seeing no one. Once, in reply to a third visit from Josephine, she had pushed a tiny note out to her under the door; but that was all the notice she would vouchsafe to any one, of her existence.

There had been some half promise given by the Principal two or three days ago that if Rosie's birthday should be fine, a holiday expedition should be made somewhere.

The day did turn out a most lovely foretaste of summer, but there were too many thunder-clouds in the school atmosphere to permit of any talk of festivities. The day dragged on with its usual succession of classes, Miss Crofton taking those belonging to the English governess, but paying no attention to Helen, who began as the hours wore away to feel an inclination to follow her antagonist's example. Through her Miss Rowe was losing her position; through her Miss Crofton was put to terrible inconvenience. Helen began to feel very miserable, but very hard; and then Josephine got hold of her, and persuaded her to listen to her story about a little boy.

CHAPTER XXVI.

JOSEPHINE'S TALE.

WHEN the three were all comfortably seated, Josephine waited a minute, staring gravely into the fire.

"Can you see your little hero in the coals, Josie?" asked Helen at last.

"N-o-o," murmured Josephine, slowly, in deep thought. Then, more quickly, "But how do you know that he is a hero?"

"How do I know?" repeated Helen, half laughing. "Why, you said that you were about to tell me the story of a little boy; so I suppose the little boy is the hero of your story, is he not?"

"O-h-h, yes, I see; but he is a hero too, Helen—a very wonderful hero. If he were a man, and had done this thing, he would be thought a hero; but he is only a little boy of ten years old, and so it is quite glorious. About

six weeks ago he was standing at a railway crossing, waiting for a train to pass. All of a sudden, just as the train was in sight, a baby escaped from its mother and ran right between the lines. The mother stood still, shrieking; so did the other two or three people by her. It was only little Harry who kept his presence of mind and noble self-forgetfulness. While the guard blew his whistle, shouted frantically, and tried to stop the train, Harry flew to the baby, threw his arm round it, and brought it and himself flat on the ground just as the train passed over them.

“When the train was brought to a standstill at last, just beyond them, the baby was picked up unhurt, but a loose hanging chain had broken Harry’s leg, and the shock and strong excitement have made this accident more serious.”

Josephine paused again. Helen’s eyes were glowing, as they always did when she heard of any action that she thought noble. She drew a deep breath, and asked in low tones, “And do you know this noble little fellow?”

“Yes,” was Josephine’s answer. “Just lately I happen to know something of him and his family. Young as he is he has seen a great deal of sadness. Up to two years ago he was

the youngest in as happy a home as I should imagine could have been found anywhere. There were four children, a father and mother; they had several servants, horses, carriages, and heaps of hothouses and all sorts of luxuries. Then a bank broke, the fortune was all lost, and in a few weeks the father and younger sister were dead, and the elder brother taken from Eton to be a clerk in a merchant's office.

"Through all these bitter trials the elder sister had behaved most bravely and beautifully, comforting her mother, striving to comfort her father and sister and cheer them back to life, soothing their deathbeds with firm assurances that she would with her labour support those they left behind, strengthening her brother to face boldly his great reverses, and so tenderly loving and cherishing the little Harry that his previous affection for her grew into the strongest love I have ever seen a child have for any one. O Helen! it is so sad to hear the poor little fellow, even in the unconsciousness of fever, sobbing for her to come to him!"

"Then why doesn't she go to him?" demanded Helen, with tearful indignation. "How can she let him even have to ask for her?"

"Because," answered Josephine, in a low

voice, "because, Nellie, she has to earn the food and medicine for him, and the doctor's fees, although her heart is almost breaking to be with him. People might be gentle with her now, poor thing! I think, under her present circumstances, I could bear anything from her myself."

"I should think so," grunted Helen huskily. "So could any one."

Josephine turned to her with a strange, keen glance, and went on with her history. "The brave, kind elder sister was engaged to be married when the bank broke. She thought her lover was such a fine, noble sort of fellow, and she was so proud of him. A few days after her father's death he came to her, and—her mother told me all this—freed her from her engagement.

"He had seemed very much in love with her while she was rich; he didn't want her now she was poor. And she said good-bye to him quite quietly, and never got ill, or anything. But from that day her mother says she grew hard and bitter to all the world but little Harry, and her very face changed. She had lost trust in every one."

"I should think so," growled Helen a second

time. "I wonder where that man is. I should like to tie his head under a pump."

Again Josephine looked at her curiously, and went on—

"There is little more to tell you of my pitiful tale, except the most pitiful ending. Of course it became necessary for the elder sister, who had been hitherto accustomed to be surrounded with luxury and deference, to work for the support of her mother and brother, and she went out as a governess.

"At first she found it hard to get profitable positions, because people distrusted the power of the elegantly-brought-up young lady to submit herself to the duties of her changed position. But she loved her mother and little Harry too much not to strive for success; and though the accumulation of troubles had warped her nature, poor thing! to harshness and bitterness and impatience, she worked so steadily, so conscientiously, and successfully with her pupils, that at last, when a first-rate position, coveted by many, was open, she succeeded in obtaining it, and rejoiced in the prospect of being able to pay for her young brother's education.

"Unhappily, in her new position she met not only with the hundred and one usual trials sure to

he felt so keenly by one with her over-tried spirit, but amongst her pupils was a girl who had never learnt to think that she ought to be patient with other people—even sometimes to submit, for love's sake, to harshness, irritability, or injustice. Very often the girl expected others to be patient with *her* in her many little freaks and whims, but when the demand came from the other side she ridiculed the idea of meeting it; and the poor young governess's strained, racked spirit was perpetually tried and tortured further by her, until at last it could bear no more, and the climax came.

“The girl triumphed, Nellie”—Josephine's voice was almost a whisper now—“but it seems to me to be a poor, wretched triumph—one to weep over. And by the nine o'clock train to-night Miss Rowe starts for home, to carry with her to the poor mother, who has been so long watching day and night by her child's bedside, the news that she has lost her position with something of disgrace. It may be long before she can get another; and she had a letter this morning from the doctor, mentioning all the expensive kinds of nourishment which little Harry must have perpetually day and night for the next three or four weeks, unless he is

to be left to die. O Helen! forgive my saying it, but I would not change places with you to-night, not to have all your cleverness ten times increased !”

“Why did you not tell me all this before?” murmured a low voice.

“Because she would not let me,” was the sad answer. “You were always so cold and contemptuous with her. You wounded her cruelly; she thought you treated her so because you despised her for being a governess.”

“How could she think me so mean?”

“When people’s hearts are sore I expect they very often think the worst things.”

And then, without another word, Helen rose and left the room.

CHAPTER XXVII.

SHE DOES GET IN !

THREE sharp raps at a door, but never an answer. Then a voice calling through the key-hole, "Let me in ! You must let me in ! I want to beg your pardon."

Still no answer. It struck seven. Helen felt desperate. She would be summoned to preparation directly. She gave another thump.

"I will break the door down if you don't let me in."

"You had better try," came the cold, taunting answer.

Then Helen got up from her knees, and stood for a few minutes deep in thought, the first result of which was a rapid descent to the class-room, and a hasty request to the presiding governess.

"Please, Mademoiselle, excuse me from preparation this evening. Pray do. I cannot attend to it indeed."

Mademoiselle looked up at the trembling girl, looked at the pale cheeks and heavy eyelids, and said with heartfelt pity, "Mais oui donc, chère petite, assurément. Vous devez vous mettre au lit."

"Thank you," said Helen; not for the commendation, but for the permission, and she quitted the room as hastily as she had entered it. But instead of going upstairs she flew into the west corridor and down it as fast as her feet would carry her, with a swift look behind her to see that she was not observed.

That west corridor ended in a large window that Miss Nellie had observed the housemaid always left for the last, in her nightly lockings-up and fastenings. And Helen was particularly anxious to get out into the garden at that forbidden hour. The proper garden entrance led out into a continuation of the balcony belonging to Miss Crofton's library, so exit there was, of course, barred. Nevertheless, the west corridor window was almost as easy a way out for the agile young gymnast, and on this occasion, most happily for several people, fortune favoured her.

Owing to the balmy day the window had been left open to the last minute; and so, before the housemaid's last minute arrived,

Helen Edison had vaulted through it into the garden. Creeping along under the wall, she soon turned the corner of the house, reached the apple-tree, climbed into it, as she had done on a certain night some weeks before, and looked in at one of the windows of the deserted dining-hall. A transient gleam of her own impudent fun glanced over her anxious face as she muttered, "I do wish servants would be more careful about shutting room-doors. If any one should be crossing the corridor now how tiresome it would be for me."

But no one was crossing the corridor, and once more Helen caught at the waterspouts and the ivy, drew herself to the wall, crept along it like a sort of moving spirit, mounted a little higher, crept on again, and——suddenly the two antagonists were face to face.

White face to white face, close together. Not even the glass between. Two pairs of startled eyes gazing into each other's very depths.

Helen might have expected to find Miss Rowe at her window. It was nothing very surprising that she should be at it. But somehow the circumstance was one utterly unlooked for now. Very often in special states of mental excitement we picture future events to ourselves under

certain aspects so vividly that we bring our minds to believe that thus, and thus only, is it possible for them to appear. When facts prove different we are quite amazed, as though the very facts themselves were telling falsehoods.

Helen had imagined Miss Rowe kneeling on the floor of her room busily engaged in packing, her face set with stern determination, which she herself would have time to note while leaning for rest on the window-sill before tapping on the panes to attract attention. This sudden meeting with the white, despairing face, was wholly outside the young climber's calculations.

"Help me in!" she murmured at last, hurriedly, "I—I am faint!"

She had climbed up there with the full intention of demanding admittance from that perilous position. Whether even so she would have obtained it, it is impossible to say had matters been as she expected. But now, in this moment, she suddenly forgot her expectations and her intentions; only an instinct of self-preservation extorted that hurried plea.

"Help me in!" And even as she uttered it the little white hands began to waver in their hold upon the window-sill.

"Rouse yourself, try to rouse yourself," was

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the equally hurried answer, "just for one minute more!" And the young governess's face flushed with eager solicitude as she stretched her arms out and caught firm hold of those of her refractory pupil.

"Now—courage," she said anxiously. "Try to raise yourself. You won't——" She paused a moment, trying to think of something to stimulate the fainting girl. "You won't turn *coward* now?"

There was a strong biting emphasis thrown into that word *coward*. But, cruel as it sounded at that moment, it indicated kindness, and had the desired effect of calling back a faint flush into Helen's cheeks, and assisted her to help herself. In another minute, half pulled and half climbing, she was over the window-sill, and lying weak and trembling on the floor of Miss Rowe's bedroom.

"Why did you do this?" asked Miss Rowe, as she held her head on her knees and bathed her face with water. She looked at her even curiously as she repeated, "How could you do such a wild thing? Your obstinate determination to withstand me to the last has nearly cost you dear this time."

"I did not do this for obstinacy's sake,"

murmured Helen. And then once more she lay silent and still, and Miss Rowe went on bathing her face. After a while Helen spoke again.

"You were going away so soon, I heard, and you would not let me in, so there was only this way left for me to get at you to tell you about the medal for little Harry, your grand little brother. Papa will get it for him."

"The medal for Harry! Your father will get it for him! What do you mean?" asked Miss Rowe, bewildered.

"Why, the gold medal, you know, that people



like so much, for being brave in saving people, and all that. Perhaps"—and then a little ghost of one of the silvery laughs issued from Nellie's pale lips—"perhaps you think you ought to have a medal too for saving me just now. I shouldn't have been so stupid, only I managed to give my head a great bump—at least, my forehead—just before I saw you, at the corner of your window-sill. I think it's a big bruise now. May we have a light to see?"

"Yes, we had better," said Miss Rowe, feeling as though she must be in a dream. And she helped Helen to rise, and then, leading her to a chair, she proceeded to light the candle and inspect her pupil's injuries.

Her first impulse, when she saw the bruised forehead, was to cry out in dismay. It was certainly no slight injury that the sharp double cornice had inflicted. One point had made a terrible bruise just above the eye, the other had made a cut just above the temple, from which the blood was flowing slowly, the cold water bathing having fortunately checked it in some measure, or Helen by now would have been feeling even weaker than she did.

"I must run to bring Miss Crofton to you," said Emily Rowe after a minute's renewal of

the cold bathing. "Your forehead must be seen to at once and bandaged."

"Then you can do it for me."

"Why, would you trust me?"

"Oh! yes—now. But do you really feel sorry for me? You look so; but do you really feel as you look?"

"I might ask you if you really feel glad to think that my little brother may have the Humane Society's medal given to him. You look so; but how can I believe that you can be really pleased to think anything pleasant may happen to any one belonging to me?"

"I should like lots of pleasant things to happen to yourself, let alone to those belonging to you, now I know——" was the answer. And then, with an attempt to smile, she let her head fall against her companion, saying, "I feel so funny. I think I'm—going to sleep—don't leave me to-night, please."

She did not go to sleep, but this time she did faint quite away, and Miss Rowe unlocked her door and rang her bell, and soon summoned aid to her. The servants came, expecting the order to carry the governess's trunks down to the hall, but they received a request instead to lift Helen on to the bed, and then to go and call their mistress.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

MADEMOISELLE BRINGS HOT COFFEE.

"YOU will not leave to-night now, will you, Miss Rowe?" asked Miss Crofton anxiously, as she finished strapping up Helen's bleeding forehead and continued her efforts to restore her to full consciousness. Miss Rowe had just gone to the door to answer the tearful inquiries of Josephine and Milly Wilmot, and did not hear the question. As she came back the Principal repeated it.

"You will not leave us to-night, will you?"

Before Miss Rowe could answer another voice answered feebly, but decidedly, "No, of course she won't, she is going to stay and take care of me. I shouldn't wonder if I were to go on like this all night, and if I had to be with Milly Wilmot she'd be going off into a continuous series of squeaks, like minute guns, all the while. Miss Rowe will be nice and quiet, and I find she has the most comfortable hands for a headache I ever felt."

"And what is Miss Rowe to do for a bed if you lie here?" asked the Principal, a smile relieving her gravity for the first time since she was hastily summoned to her wilful pupil.

"I forgot that," was the answer, still with closed eyes and slow moving lips. "But, after all, it's not much good remembering it, for my head has turned into lead, if there isn't anything heavier, so it must stop where it is till it gets lighter again."

And so it did. And Miss Rowe sat up with Miss Nell and most patiently ministered to her throughout those long hours of racking headache. And, truth to say, the two disturbers of the peace of Crofton House got a very large and most undeserved measure of affectionate solicitude from every one.

"Poor Miss Rowe!" and "Poor Helen Edison!" were words in the mouths of all. Of course in real fact they needed pity much less now than they had done during the past few weeks; but the circumstance of bright, blooming Helen lying awake, for nearly the first time in her life, the night through with suffering, and Miss Rowe sitting up the night through to attend upon her, were facts so remarkable that perhaps it is little wonder if they attracted unusual sympathy.

A little before nine o'clock there was a gentle tap at the room door, followed by its opening.

"How nice!" murmured Helen, as she sat with her head leaning against the back of the bed, looking rather ghostlike.

"How nice!" Miss Rowe felt inclined to echo, as the fragrant smell of hot, perfectly made coffee filled the room. She was beginning to feel very much in want of food; but she said nothing; and Helen repeated "How nice!" and with some pain opened one eye. She closed it again in disgust. "Ah! take away that horrid bread and butter, I can't eat."

"*Mais donc,*" said Mademoiselle, in gentle deprecation, "*c'est pour la pauvre Mees Rowe, chère petite.*"

Helen looked puzzled for a moment; and then, in spite of headache and the great blinding bruise, she forced open both eyes and exclaimed, "Oh! what a selfish, horrid thing I am! I thought Josephine was too hard upon me an hour or two ago. I have always thought myself rather grandly the other way; but I see now. Ah, yes, I see now. It has been all I—I—I with me. My 'whims and fancies,' as Josephine said. Of course, I thought the coffee was for me. I always think that everybody

must be thinking about pleasing me ; and if they don't, I've—I've hated them."

And then, in her sudden awakening and feverish excitement, Helen burst into a violent fit of weeping ; and Miss Rowe, having whispered to kind, troubled little Mademoiselle to leave them for a while, set herself to soothe her. Provided with the basin of vinegar and water, she set to work once more sponging the burning forehead and hot face, as she said in low, calming tones, "You and I have both been wrong, Helen. But perhaps, after all, in the end we shall have proved to have done each other good rather than harm. Over-indulgence has led you to expect to have your own way in everything ; unkindness"—and the young teacher's lip quivered for a moment—"unkindness has led me to indulge a spirit of opposition, and to struggle on all occasions for mastery over every one with whom I have of late years come in contact."

"If it hadn't been for Josephine you would have gone away by now, carrying hatred of me with you," said Helen heavily ; "and I should have gone on hating you as long as I lived."

Miss Rowe shivered. That picture of unending hatred for each other looked very grim, very hideous, when it was painted in those deliberate

plain words ; and yet she knew well that it had been very possibly a true one. And yet they were both Christians ; or no, that cannot be said. They were both, like many others in the world, professing Christians. "See how these Christians love," was said of old. "See how Christians wrangle," might be said of those so-called religious people represented by Miss Rowe and Helen Edison.

There are many things considered old-fashioned and obsolete now-a-days, but one of the most old-fashioned and obsolete, one is sometimes tempted to believe, is the saying, spoken nearly nineteen hundred years ago—"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

Miss Rowe sat thinking, and after a while she left off bathing the bruised forehead, for its owner was so very still she imagined that she must have fallen asleep. Under this belief she gave free rein to memory. Those other sick-beds by which she had watched so faithfully, more than two years ago, came back to her so vividly. She seemed once more to hear the words of Divine consolation with which she had comforted herself as well as those so dear to her, and then she thought of these blank two years

of dreariness that had followed upon her decision to do without that strength and consolation for the future. She was startled in the midst of her reflections by the quiet, unexpected remark, "How very clever Josephine is!"

"Yes—she is," was the equally quiet answer after a moment's pause.

"How queer every one else here would think it to hear us say so," said the tired young voice after another slight pause.

"Yes," was the earnest reply. "They would not understand." Then soon, "Have you been to sleep?"

"Oh dear no! I never can sleep in the train. And there are ever so many railway trains in, instead of out of, my head just now. And I find it quite as bothering, only more so. Have you eaten your bread and butter yet?"

"No. And oh! you have not had the coffee you thought you should like. I am afraid it is cold now. I will have it made hot again."

"Yes, do," said Helen; and when it was brought back steaming once more she rewarded Miss Rowe with a mischievous smile as she said, "No, thank you. Not for me. I couldn't touch it—not if you would promise me the best gallop on the nicest horse in England."

"But I thought you said you should like it," remonstrated Miss Rowe, with a touch of her usual asperity.

"Oh no!" was the calm answer. "I never said anything of the sort; but if I had said I shouldn't you would never have had it boiled up again for yourself, I am sure. I am going to learn to be clever, like Josephine, you see. She is always thinking for other people's comfort, as if it was just the very thing she liked doing best of anything in the world. The swing is an instance. You know she is always swinging me and the others, and one day last week I asked her if she never had a swing herself. She said just simply, 'No, not now.' I said, 'Don't you like it?' She did not answer; but Rosie did for her, exclaiming, 'Oh! I should think she does then! While we were here last summer during the holidays Josie liked nothing so much as swinging, or sitting in the swing reading. But she won't swing now because she says every one else likes it so much!' That's just Josephine in everything."

"Yes," said Miss Rowe, in a low tone; "she has been a living lesson in the house."

No more was said then, for the door opened, and Miss Crofton appeared with a composing

draught for the patient, and an injunction that there must be no talking after it, for fear of destroying its effect. Unfortunately, the violence of the headache compelled silence, so neither Helen nor her companion felt disposed for any more conversation for some hours to come. It was not until between three and four o'clock in the morning that either of them spoke again.

Miss Rowe had been kneeling beside a chair behind the bed for a very long time, when at last Helen fancied she caught the sound of low, smothered sobs. She listened more earnestly, and at length said, but more as if she were speaking to herself than to her companion, "Yes, after all, it is not quite comfortable. I expect you would have been ever so glad to see little Harry, and of course he would have been awfully glad to see you. Of course you are miserable, and it is still all my fault."

"Everything has been as much my fault as yours," answered Miss Rowe, rising and coming forward. "But do not think that I have been crying now only for sadness. I have been thinking of what you said about the medal for Harry. It seems impossible that he should really have one; but, oh! you cannot think how happy it

would make mamma and me to see our little darling's bravery so recognised !”

“I should think so !” exclaimed Helen. Her headache was getting better now. “I only wish that I had a brother, big or little, to do such a grand thing, and be recognised. But you need not doubt that Harry shall have it, for papa has a lot to do, somehow or other, with the Royal Humane Society ; and when he hears what I have to tell him, I am certain that he will say he sees quite clearly where one of the best medals of the year ought to go. I shall go to see Harry in the holidays.”

“I thought you were going to Scotland ?”

“Was I ? Oh ! then there'll be two things to do ; I shall like that. Do you know, my head is ever so much better. I think I shall be able to lie down now and go to sleep. Please go to sleep too.”

And two minutes later she was in a refreshing, dreamless slumber.

CHAPTER XXIX.

WAKING THOUGHTS.

WHEN Helen Edison awoke, about midday, she found Josephine Bell installed in the post of watcher. She raised herself and glanced hastily around the room.

"Where is Miss Rowe?" she asked quickly. "Surely, Josie, you have not all let her go away while I have been asleep?"

"She had to go, Nellie, dear," was the quiet answer. "But perhaps she will come back again soon."

"Perhaps nonsense!" exclaimed Helen, springing out of bed and beginning to huddle on her clothes with angry impatience, muttering the while, "It's a disgraceful shame of you all, that's what it is."

"What - are you doing?" asked Josephine, coming forward after a few moments' hesitation. "Miss Crofton left orders with me that you were

not to get up, even if you felt able, until she had seen you."

"I don't care what orders were left," was the passionate answer. "A school is not a prison."

"But won't you at least tell me why you wish to get up?" asked Josephine gently. "Is it to do your lessons?"

"Lessons, indeed!" was the sharp retort. "I should think not! I am going to tell Miss Crofton that she must send a telegram to get Miss Rowe to come back. And if Miss Rowe won't be here with me, I'll go home."

"Hush, Nellie, dear," said her companion gently, "you are making your head ache again. Miss Rowe has not left on your account now. She got a telegram, unhappily, this morning before nine o'clock to summon her home instantly to see her brother, who was suddenly taken worse in the night. In the midst of her trouble and hurry she thought of you. Get into bed again, and I will bring you the little note she left."

Josephine might truly call it a little note, for it only consisted of three lines; but its importance could not be measured by its size:—"Pray for us in our trouble. But whatever happens, believe that I most earnestly thank God that He

has taught us to part friends. I hope to see you again soon.—E. R.”

For some minutes slow heavy tears fell upon these few words. At last Josephine Bell said in a low voice, “I thought that note would be some comfort to you.”

“So it might be,” was the despairing answer, “if I deserved any comfort. O Josie! why don’t you all hate me instead of being so good to me? You ought to have beaten me just now, when I got up in a passion, instead of speaking softly to me.”

“And so made you worse?” asked her school-fellow, with a slight smile.

Helen looked more doleful than before as she replied sadly, “Yes, you are right; it would have made me worse. But it’s the way I deserve to be treated, for it’s just the way I’ve served Miss Rowe and other people. When they seemed aggravated I have just aggravated them a little more.”

“But you won’t do so again?”

“How can I say! Last night I thought that I had all of a sudden grown so good that I should never be bad again. And then you see! The first thing that crossed me I was just as abominable as ever.”

"Not quite," was the half-laughing answer, "You see, this time your wilfulness was for the sake of some one else. It was really the effect of your penitence about Miss Rowe."

"Effect of rubbish! It was the effect of my temper," was the irritable answer. And then Helen laid her head against her schoolfellow's shoulder with a tired sigh and the remark, "And that last amiable little speech was the effect of my headache, Josie dear, so you'll please let that pass as nothing."

For Josephine's part, she would have let a hundred impertinent speeches pass as nothing if they would have brought the colour back into her companion's cheeks; but the excitement attendant on the past hasty deeds and words had brought back the pain so intensely that Miss Crofton was equally grieved and shocked when she came in a few minutes later to see the patient.

"I wish I could do something for you, my poor child," she said pityingly.

"So do I," was the quick, unexpected answer.

"What is it, then, dear," asked Miss Crofton, "that you would like me to do?"

"Only just to make me like Josephine now, directly, please, if you don't mind," was the

cool, slow answer, out of lips almost white with suffering.

The tears were in the Principal's eyes as she bent forward to kiss them. "It will take higher power than I have to do that, my child. Not you only, but I and all here, shall indeed have deep cause to thank God if He blesses us with the gift of her meek and Christ-like spirit."

"Oh, hush, please, hush!" whispered Josephine. "I would not have Nellie changed into a likeness of me for anything."

Possibly Miss Crofton secretly echoed that exclamation as regarded the wholesale metamorphosis, but she certainly prayed most earnestly that her wilful pupil's present good wishes might ripen into fruit. Bright, winsome, brave, and bonny as she was, there could be little hope for her of even temporal happiness if self were to continue to be ever the foremost in her thoughts.

CHAPTER XXX.

A NEW KIND OF JUMP, AND NO BREAD AND BUTTER.

"So unselfish," Helen had been called from babyhood upwards by nurses, friends, and acquaintances, and even by her father and mother.

"So unselfish," Miss Nellie had hitherto thought herself, because she was gifted with an open-handed generosity and keen sympathies. She was slowly, painfully beginning to learn from Josephine what a far more wide and wonderful thing unselfishness is than she had ever imagined, and how utterly impossible of acquirement without the help of One with whom all things are possible.

The three companions had been silent for some time, each engaged with her own thoughts, when Helen murmured, with scarcely moving lips, "I am worrying myself so much about little Harry. I try not, but I cannot help it. Would it be giving you a great deal of trouble to let

me send an answer-paid telegram to Miss Rowe to ask how he is this afternoon ? ”

It need scarcely be said that the petition was granted, although with some fear on Miss Crofton's part lest the news should be bad. Helen dictated the message herself.

“ Please let us know how he is. Don't trouble yourself to send more than a word.”

Her excitement grew so painfully intense before the answer came that Josephine found even her soothing influence wasted. Indeed, poor Helen could scarcely bear to be spoken to. At last she burst into tears, and said piteously, “ O Josie dear, don't be vexed, but do please leave off attending to me, and just pray for me, that Miss Rowe's little brother may live ! It seems to be all self again even now, you see, but I cannot help it to-day. My head won't let me forget myself.”

And after that outburst she said nothing more until Miss Crofton came to her with the open return telegram :—“ Slight improvement again. Doctor bids us not despair. Grateful thanks for the inquiry.”

This second improvement in the little boy's condition was happily permanent, and from that day he began to amend far more rapidly than

before the alarming relapse. But the comfort Helen Edison derived from the answer to her telegram was all she was capable of receiving on that score for many days. The blow on her head proved to be of a far more serious character than had been at first supposed, and when she woke up to consciousness at the end of some days she found her mother installed as nurse at her bedside, and little Rose seated, quiet as a little mouse, on a footstool at her mother's feet, knitting. The pair looked so still, so calm, so grave, that it was quite restful to watch them. But they little knew that there was a pair of wide-open eyes gazing at them while they bent so diligently over their work. They were finely startled at last.

"Let's have a game with your wool ball, Rosie, before it's all used," said a weak, thin little voice, followed by a weak, thin little laugh, which was repeated at sight of the commotion the simple speech had caused.

The next minute Rose had been gently banished from the room to fly wildly all over the house, even into the kitchens, proclaiming the joyful news that "Helen was well again."

"What!" exclaimed Milly Wilmot, between

tears and laughter, "well again all with one jump?"

"Well, getting well," corrected Rose. "But it's all the same, for I heard the doctor tell her mamma that once she took a turn she would be all right in no time; and she has taken a turn now, for she wanted to have a game with my ball of knitting-wool; so you see——"

And whatever Milly might think, her little schoolfellow ran off with the decided conviction that she had come off conqueror in that matter. Meanwhile Mrs. Edison held her child clasped closely in her arms, while she murmured fervently, "Thank God for sparing me my child!"

"And thank God, mamma," whispered Helen, "that He has spared me that I may learn to grow like Josephine."

"Or, as I suppose Josephine herself would say," said Mrs. Edison gently, "to grow to be like her Pattern?"

"Yes, mamma."

Mrs. Edison let her talk no more then, but laid her back on her pillows, gave her some beef-tea, and bade her go to sleep again. She obeyed the injunction so well that morning had faded into afternoon, afternoon into evening, before she once more opened her eyes to look round the

room. Her only companion now was Josephine, who was instantly beside her when she found that she was awake.

"Have you slept comfortably, Nellie, dear?" she asked, as she stroked the little white hand which had grown so very thin during the past fortnight.

For a few moments there was no answer. Then a sigh came, and Josephine asked, more anxiously, "Were you in pain again?"

"No, not in pain," was the quiet reply. "I think I must have slept a long time very soundly indeed. But for the past hour or more, as it seems to me, I have been dreaming, and dreaming the same thing over and over again, till it got quite terrible, and I felt I would give anything to be able to say the words aloud, to get rid of the sort of muffled sound of threatening in them."

"What words were they, then? Anything very dreadful?"

"They sounded very dreadful to me, partly because they were said so often, and partly because I have thought lately what an impossible command they give: 'Be ye perfect, as your Father which is in heaven is perfect!' On and on and on, Josephine, that text has rung through

my brain this afternoon while I have been sleeping. It seemed as though some other voice than my own was repeating it, and as though in grim mockery of my weakness and wickedness."

"Dear Nellie," said her schoolfellow tenderly, "conscience often does seem like some other person's voice speaking to one, I think. And it is your own fear, you see, which puts in the mocking tone. But, do you know, I think you are beginning to worry yourself rather in the wrong direction now."

"Oh, very likely," sighed Helen, rather bitterly. "Whatever I do is pretty sure to be in the wrong direction. I know that as well as you."

"But I don't know it," said Josephine, half laughing. "Is it likely that you would be chief favourite with us all if you were always doing things in the wrong direction? But, like every one else, you have been doing some things in a wrong direction, and now you seem to think that you are expected in your own strength to go right. You know our Saviour said, 'Without me ye can do nothing.' What I think we all want is more faith and more love. You will soon find that loving Jesus Christ is the most wonderful help to doing the things that please Him."

"You love Jesus Christ, Josie?" said Helen in a low voice.

"Yes, so much!" was the simple, fervent answer; and then the conversation ended, for the door opened, and a mass of golden curls appeared bending cautiously in, and then a pair of earnest blue eyes, and finally, when the blue eyes had discovered that the invalid was wide awake, the rosebud of a face full of an eager air of importance, together with the rest of the dear little maiden, came bravely in, and broke into a quiver of delight.

All the seriousness faded from Helen's countenance as she looked at the bright little being.

"Come here and be beaten, you little impudence," she said, laughing. "How dared you run off with that ball this morning? Lift her on to the bed, Josie. There, that's nice! Now, Miss Impudence, it looked to me this morning very much as if you had been stealing some of my mamma's love—what do you say to that, pray, little thief?"

"O Helen!" exclaimed the child; "she is so nice, you don't know! Almost as nice as you and Josephine!"

"Don't I know, indeed!" was the gratified retort. "And as to being almost as nice as me,

you blind little bat, why she's at least one hundred and fifty times as nice. Even bread and butter is nicer than I am ; at least, it would be just now."

Rose laughed and clapped her hands.

"How funny that you should say that ! Miss Crofton sent me to say that Josephine and I might have tea here if you were awake and would like it. She told me to say 'and if you would not mind seeing us eat bread and butter.' "

"Not if I may share it ; certainly not."

"Ah," said Rose, rather crestfallen, "but that, I am afraid, is just what you must not do. The doctor said you were not to have anything solid till to-morrow."

"Then he's a solid old humbug, and I've a good mind to swallow all the brass knobs of the bedstead this minute."

"Swallow what, my dear ?" asked a bright, pleasant voice in a tone of astonishment.

Helen raised herself with a glad cry, and stretched out her hands—"O Madam, Madam ! how nice to see you again ! I did talk of swallowing the bed-knobs to revenge myself on the doctor. But I'll swallow my indignation instead now."

Miss Crofton smiled, as much in gladness at her pupil's recovered strength as at her speech.

"What is the complaint you have against the doctor, lassie? I can assure you that he has been very good and kind to you."

"Maybe, Madam," with a doubtful little pout.
"But he *is* shockingly stingy on the article of bread and butter."

CHAPTER XXXI.

“ WISE AS SERPENTS, HARMLESS AS DOVES.”

“ HELEN ! O Helen ! I want to dance up to the moon ! ” exclaimed Rosie Bell, by way of morning greeting one day, as she danced into her schoolfellow’s room.

Helen Edison’s convalescence was sufficiently assured not to be very greatly endangered by any ordinary shock, but nevertheless the colour that rushed into her cheeks was somewhat too brilliant as she looked at the child’s beamingly happy face, and started forward to ask what caused her excitement.

“ Come here, little one,” called Mrs. Edison ; “ come here and sit down, and tell Helen you are to give her no explanation until she comes back to her breakfast. To-morrow morning,” added the mother, smiling, and addressing her daughter, “ you shall have it in bed again by

way of punishment for getting up from the table in this fashion."

"Suppose I sit on the bed to eat my dinner to-day instead, please ma'am?" was asked demurely and with folded hands; and then an eager return to the little schoolfellow.

"But now, Rosie, out with that news of yours. It will burn a hole in your mouth, as money does in my pocket."

"I think it's much more likely to serve me as that sugar-plum did yesterday, and choke me," laughed the child. "But you know, Helen, I ought not to have made you think so much about it, for it is nothing much to concern you, after all; excepting as you care about me and Josephine. For they are not your papa and mamma, you see, and you don't even know them a weeny bit."

As Rose finished this long and somewhat incoherent speech, she wound up breathlessly with a "Don't, Helen! how can you? What an ugly face!"

Mrs. Edison also laughingly ejaculated, "Don't, Helen; you look a perfect little fright."

"'Little,' mamma?" was the slow, grave inquiry; "rather a lanky 'little,' isn't it? But I am sorry I look a fright. I only ought to

look stupid, as I feel. Rose has been telling me something that is harder to understand than German grammar, and yet she understands it all, though she is such a mite. I wonder whether if I parsed it I should make out the sense better. 'Your,' pronoun—possessive pronoun. That means mine——"

"O Helen! I said——"

"And I said, 'Hush, Rosie; don't interrupt.' 'Papa and mamma,' nouns, active nouns—at least, sometimes—they are under the head of Varieties, I suppose—not always amusing. Then 'weeny'—Greek participle—obsolete—word used by pre-Adamite man—no longer understood of the common people.' No, Rosie, I give it up. The only bit I understand is the active nouns."

"And you certainly don't understand them," was the retort, with a toss of the golden curls. "For you said they were yours, and all the while they are mine, and they are coming home to England, and then you'll see. And, oh! I—I—am so glad!"

And, to prove her gladness, with those last words the child jumped off her chair and ran to hide her face and tear-filled eyes in Mrs. Edison's lap. And Helen tried to get out an, "Oh! I

am so glad for you both, Rosie!" but her voice choked before she could finish the sentence, and the tears rolled down her cheeks instead.

Josephine looked as really puzzled when she came into the room as Helen had pretended to be.

"Has Rosie hurt herself? Is Helen worse?" she asked anxiously.

Mrs. Edison opened her lips to reply, but Miss Nellie was too quick for her.

"Worse! I should think I am worse, indeed. Riddles are bad enough when they are served up as dessert in the evening with chestnuts and a big fire. But administered raw, in the morning, they are simply awful."

"Then you certainly should not be administering them to me," said Josephine, smiling. "What is the matter?"

"Riddle, you mean. Why, given a papa and mamma bound to stay in India another three years, how can they be coming home in three months? That mean little thing, Rose, hid her face, so as not to tell us the answer."

"O Helen!" expostulated a rosebud mouth, as an April little face raised itself from Mrs. Edison's lap to lean itself instead against that lady's arm.

But little heed was paid to the expostulation, as Nellie pulled the elder sister down on to the half of her own chair and repeated her demand for explanations.

"They are very simple, after all," said Josephine, with a tremor of gladness in her voice. "There is some important Government inquiry going on over here into some Indian affairs. And it seems that our father has made himself so much better acquainted with the matter than any one else, that it has been found almost necessary to send for him, to discuss and help to arrange the business. Mamma says it is considered that he has won great honour for himself, and at any rate he has won great happiness for us."

"Yes, indeed," said Mrs. Edison, with the heartiest sympathy. "I don't wonder that you are both bright at the unexpected prospect before you. It will make an especially great difference to you, Josephine, too, I suppose, for no doubt you will live at home with your mother?"

"Yes; so mamma says," was the glad answer. "I am to have a teacher at home, and learn under mamma's own help and guidance."

"What do you mean?" asked Helen, in a tone suddenly grown so sharp and hard that all her

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hearers started. She drew away the hand linked in Josephine's arm, and turned to face her as she put her imperious question. The gladness that had begun to make the pale, careworn face more like those around it died away, and the old look of troubled perplexity gave all the answer Josephine found power to make.

Helen shrugged her shoulders impatiently, and pushed her plate from her, as she said, passionately, "Oh, of course. You are just like everybody else, after all; I was a ridiculous donkey to suppose anything else. You were willing to do a good work here, so long as it was no bother to you, but the very moment there's anything nicer you rush off as if the place were on fire. Very well, then. Only I tell you this, you need not be surprised, if you leave me, to hear that I have fallen back into being as bad as ever again."

"That cannot be much worse than you are showing yourself while she is still with you, Helen," said Mrs. Edison, in a voice of shocked reproach. "Where is your hope suddenly fled to that you would never again let self usurp the whole of your thoughts? O Helen, my child! truly you make me ashamed of you, and still more ashamed of myself! I am beginning to learn, but almost too late, I am afraid, that I

must have been cruelly injudicious in your upbringing to foster you so in selfishness."

Mrs. Edison stopped speaking, and Rose, who had been looking in great bewilderment at her companions, echoed the word "selfishness," as though she could not believe her ears.

"Please, ma'am, you don't mean that Helen is selfish, do you?"

"Ay, indeed, little one. What is it but selfish to want to keep Josephine here, instead of rejoicing that she should go home to be with your mamma?"

However, instead of looking convinced, Rose only answered, "Ah! but that is because she is so nice, and loves Josephine so much."

"Of course it is," broke in Helen, but with the passion in her voice changing into a sort of doleful little growl. "And because I look up to her so much, and because I trust her so much, that I know it is no good for me to hope to leave off being a plague if I haven't her to help me."

Josephine began to smile again. "I think you are flattering me, Nellie, as you do when you say that I shall find out some day that I have learnt as much as most people."

"That's not flattery."

"Well, at any rate it is pleasant to believe, and

a help to me too. And if—if—" (timidly) "you really think I can be of any little help to you, I will tell mamma I should like to stay another term."

Helen put up her hand again, not to her schoolfellow's arm this time, but around her waist. "You'll do no such thing, my dear. But I wish Milly Wilmot were here now."

"Why do you wish that?" asked three voices at once.

"Because when I told her, a few days ago, that Josephine was the sort of stuff martyrs and missionaries are made out of, she said, 'Nonsense, girl-stuff was never strong enough for that sort of wear.' And now she could just see who was right."

"And do you mean that it was only to prove this that you spoke and acted as you did just now?" asked Mrs. Edison.

"Not altogether," was the answer, with a grim little smile. "The fact is, mamma, as I heard that dear, wise old Doctor Humbug telling you yesterday, my nerves are rather weak just now, and Josephine's announcement came without any preparation, like a bombshell into the midst of all my diligently matured plans, hopes, and aspirations for the coming term. And, really and truly, do you know I think

you had better take me away now, before I get into any more scrapes; for whatever I *shall* do without this dear old Josie I don't know."

"'Take care of me,' Josie said," whispered Rosie, coaxingly, as she slipped her little hand into Helen's.

Helen's eyes opened, and the expression in their dark depths deepened and softened wonderfully. "Did Josie really say that?" she asked, in almost as low a whisper as the child's.

Josephine answered for herself. "Yes, Nellie. I hoped that you would. I wish you would. It would make me so happy and at rest about her to think she had you for her friend here."

"You would really trust me, and trust me gladly, to look after your pet and darling?"

"Ay, indeed. Only help her to grow as worthy of love as you are yourself, and I shall be content, and papa and mamma also," was the hearty answer.

And Helen laid her cheek against her companion's, and said quietly, "Clever Josephine."

Soon after the two sisters went off together, and as the door closed behind them Mrs. Edison asked, "What was your thought, my child, a while ago, when you said, 'Clever Josephine?' Can you tell me?"

Helen was seated on the floor before the fire with her head resting on her mother's knees, but she looked up now as she answered, "Since she is not going to stay with me any longer herself, she is leaving her trust in me for my safeguard."

"And you will not abuse it?"

"Please God, never!"

"Clever Josephine," murmured the mother in her heart, as she also uttered a prayer and a fervent blessing.

CHAPTER XXXII.

A CHANGE FOR MISS ROWE.

It wanted but one day to the end of the Easter holidays, but one day to many changes in the small world of Crofton House.

“And who of us all, I wonder, will be most affected by the changes?”

It was Helen Edison who spoke, and she looked round at the little group gathered with her about the fire in the back-room—good-natured little Fräulein, the two Bells, and her mother.

There had been a long silence in the room, when Helen broke it abruptly by her remark, following a habit common with her of uttering aloud the climax to a long train of thought. The softly spoken exclamation had so little to do with Fräulein's merry German song, which had been the last subject under discussion, that no one was immediately ready with an answer. At last Mrs. Edison said with a slight smile, “If

your enigmatical speech, Nellie child, refers to the changes here, I should think there can be no shadow of a doubt that Miss Bell will be the one to feel the change most greatly."

"I don't know that, mamma," answered Helen. "I decided so at first; but the more I turn the matter over in my mind the more doubtful I grow. There is Rose, you know, without her sister."

A deep sigh from that small maiden announced her opinion of the serious importance of that change. Helen continued, "Then there is the change to me of having to learn to alter from a monkey into a human being. That will be an awfully tremendous change, I can tell you, let alone the horrid change of having to learn to do without Josephine. But, do you know, the person who *I* think will surely feel these changes most of all will be Miss Rowe."

"The change from taking charge of a monkey to teaching a human being, you mean?" asked Mrs. Edison, laughing.

Helen laughed too. "No, mamma, great as that change will, no doubt, be, I do not mean that. What I have been thinking of is the different position she will hold in the school this next term, and I am afraid she will feel it very much indeed. You see, last term she was next

in authority to Miss Crofton herself. When Miss Crofton was away Miss Rowe was supreme."

"Excepting where a certain obstreperous young lady, whom we know, was concerned."

"Ay, and even there. For the unfortunate referred to did have to submit very often, poor thing! whatever you may think about the matter, and though she kicked sometimes. But now, only think what a contrast Miss Rowe will feel it now that Mrs Gray is coming back again to take her own post once more."

"That Meesis Gray is verry nice, *meine liebe*," said Fräulein reassuringly.

But Helen shook her head. "So she may be nice. I suppose she is, since you all say so. Miss Crofton says that I shall learn to like her better than I love herself, which, of course, is absurd. But however all this may be, it cannot prevent poor Miss Rowe from feeling that she is gone down in the scale."

"How glad you would have been a few weeks ago," said Mrs. Edison gently, "that she should have this painful experience."

Helen looked up quickly. "Why, mamma, that is the very thing. It is just knowing how tremendously delighted I should have been at her deposition, before I got my head cracked——"

"My dear child!" in remonstrance, "where do you get such expressions from? Not from your father or me, I know."

"No, mother dear, it's innate genius. Milly Wilmot says I'm quite a prodigy in those sorts of ways. But I was going to say, it is because of knowing how glad I should have been in those once-upon-a-time days that I claim to understand better than any of you, better than any one else, what sort of a trial it will be to her to seem to sink lower before us all. It is the pretty general opinion here that I was rather clever in inventing ways to annoy her, I would gladly manage to show some cleverness in inventing a way to spare her some portion of this vexation."

As Helen proceeded in the above little speech the face of her schoolfellow, Josephine Bell, had been growing more and more intent, and she now bent forward and laid her hand on the little ones lying folded on her companion's lap, as she asked eagerly, "You do really feel like that, Nellie? You do really wish that Miss Rowe should be spared any pain, or—or—as you say, vexation perhaps, that she might be caused by having to submit to quite a different position here, to what she was able to hold last term? You really would be sorry for her?"

Helen looked searchingly at the face bent towards her. "Really *would* be sorry? Josie, what do you mean?—what is in your mind? You are hiding something from me, and you are not clever at deception. Out with it. Tell me what you are thinking of. Is anything more going to happen that I know nothing about?"

There was no answer. Helen looked steadfastly at Josephine, then raised her eyes to the countenances of the others of the party, then back to Josephine again. But still there was silence.

"Well," said the clear, quick voice at last, "why have I been kept in the dark about this other change that is to take place?"

"Because I was afraid to tell you—you have said you don't like changes."

"And so, on the strength of that admission, my friends are benevolent enough to administer them to me in the form of thunder-claps? Very considerate of them, I'm sure. You, at least, might have been kinder to me, surely, mamma."

There was a suspicious tremor in the girl's voice as she uttered the last expostulation, speaking of genuine distress, and Mrs. Edison answered instantly, "I am not to blame in the matter, dear child. I know as little as yourself to what Josephine can be referring."

"And I—I have not the leetle hint," added Fräulein.

"Oh!" ejaculated Helen, beginning to look much relieved. "Then I suppose the scheme, whatever it is, is still safely stowed away in Josie's own brain. Is it open to discussion, Josie?"

But the half-laughing question met no smiling response. Indeed, Josephine's countenance expressed more distress than before as she answered in slow, hesitating tones, "I am afraid there will not be much use in discussing the thing now, for it's done. Miss Rowe's letter this morning quite settles it."

Helen sprang up from her chair with an impatient light in her eyes. "O Josie! you are trying to-day! What thing is done? What does Miss Rowe's letter settle?"

"About her coming to be with me."

Helen sat down again without a word. She understood it all now. She had little need of the explanations which, after a long pause, Josephine proceeded to give, of how this last great change had been brought about. The new home which Mr. Bell had commissioned his friend to rent for him during his stay in England was within a mile of the Rowes' cottage, and when Josephine

received a letter from her mother, telling her to lose no time in securing a companion teacher for herself, aided by Miss Crofton's kind and valuable assistance, her thoughts at once turned to the young governess, who had written to accept the offer, which would keep her so close to her home, with the deepest gratitude.

"And won't it be a most beautifully delightful happy thing for Harry, don't you think, Helen?" exclaimed little Rose eagerly, her face bright with sympathy. Her favourite school-fellow, however, was not just then in tone to be quite so enthusiastic about the matter.

"Oh, I suppose he'll like it," she said grimly. "Everything seems to be going to be beautifully delightful for every one but myself. Mamma, do you think I've a right just now to quote on my own account poor old Jacob's words and say, 'All these things are against me'?"

A smile flitted for a moment over Mrs. Edison's face as she ejaculated, "My poor little hardly used daughter!" But the smile disappeared, and she looked very serious as she added earnestly, "No, my child; indeed no. So far from adopting the patriarch's sad and bitter cry, you should sing with the Psalmist, 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His bene-

fits. . . . Who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies.' For my part, I see in the changes now taking place about you the tender care of that most gracious and loving Father who watches over even the most insignificant of His straying lambs, and takes care that none are tempted above that they are able to bear. The mutual efforts of you and Miss Rowe after patience, gentleness, and forbearance are as yet very new. It is more than possible that in the hurry and wear of hard school-work you would both break down in your good resolutions, if you came too much in contact before they have had time to grow mature."

Helen shook her head. "But, mamma, how am I ever to know if there is any improvement if I am never tried?"

"Never tried, indeed! Why you are being tried now, and," with a rather mischievous smile, "not coming out of the trial quite with flying colours, although there is a decided improvement in your manner of receiving Josephine's other important piece of news. If you go on improving at this rapid rate we shall have to frame you as a sort of pattern-sampler."

"Or make me into a caravan exhibition—'To be shown at a penny a head, the Patience Pro-

digy!' Don't you come to see me, Rose, for they'll have to feed me on live children to keep me in a properly docile condition."

"What are you talking about now, my queer lassie?" asked Miss Crofton, who had just come into the room with a letter in her hand. "I never knew before that the baby-eating ogres were considered patterns of docility. But here is a letter for you which may agree with you better at present than a cannibal meal."

Helen's bright eyes, as she saw the handwriting, gave full assent to this supposition.

"It is from papa," she announced gladly. "An answer, of course, to my one about little Harry. O Madam Josephine! you may be giving Miss Rowe the pleasure of living near her brother, but if *I* were a sister I know I should think a thousand times more of the pleasure that I shall have helped to give them."

"What is that?" asked Miss Crofton, drawing in a chair beside Helen Edison, and joining the little circle about the fire. "What pleasure do you hope to procure them, my lassie, that can compare with the pleasure of being together?"

"Why, honour and glory, to be sure," replied Helen, with glowing cheeks. "The exquisite pleasure of having the world recognise that her

brother has performed a splendid action. Is not that worth ever so much more than seeing each other?"

"To some people, no doubt," was the grave, low-spoken answer. "The Spartan mothers of old felt with you, and so have many women since. But it is not given to all to have such courage for those they care for."

"Not to me, for one, I fear," said Mrs. Edison. "But open your letter, child, and see what your father says. You know you are making very sure of little Harry having that medal, before you have heard if there is even the slightest chance of his getting it."

"Slightest chance!" repeated Helen, half indignantly. "O mamma! how can you? Who can have done anything much braver than Harry did to save a life? And now that papa knows all about it, and can tell all about it, what doubt can I or any one else have on the subject? But never mind, you'll soon hear."

So saying Helen tore open her envelope and drew out the letter, with the chief contents of which she believed herself already so well acquainted. She began aloud in a triumphant tone,—*"MY OWN DEAREST DAUGHTER,—I am so thankful to receive such good accounts of*

your restored health. Your account of that fine little fellow's noble act has greatly interested me. Something certainly should be done for him, although—although—I—I——”

Helen's voice wavered—stammered—stopped. Her eyes rapidly ran over the next few words, then, with a low cry, the paper fell from her hands, she started to her feet, and turned to run out of the room. Instead, however, of accomplishing her purpose she ran into Miss Crofton's outstretched arms, who held her close, while she said tenderly, “My poor little lassie! What is it now? You seem to be always in trouble.”

“Yes, yes; so I say—always in trouble!” readily assented Helen, ceasing to struggle for freedom when she found her captor so in accord with her own sentiments. “I told mamma just now that I am like Jacob with his ‘All these things are against me,’ and so I am.”

“My dear, my dear,” began the Principal, vainly trying to steady her voice, and then breaking into uncontrollable laughter she exclaimed, “O Helen, my dear, you must forgive me; but you are so odd! What does the child mean by being like—like—Jacob?”

A rueful little smile lurked around Miss

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Nellie's own lips as she answered for herself, "So I am. He lost his children, and I am losing, one after another, all my hopes and plans. And they were nearly all of them hopes and plans for other people. I am sure if things go on like this it will be a proof that it is ever so much best to be selfish."

"Ever so much best, you mean, my Nellie, or ought to mean," said Mrs. Edison gently, "to learn, not only to be unselfish, but also to say meekly, 'Thy will be done!' But why does your father say that Harry cannot have the medal?—for I suppose we may guess that much from your doleful looks."

"Yes, indeed; and all because that baby—the tiresome little thing—tumbled under a train instead of into the water. It really deserves a good pinch."

"O Helen! how can you?" murmured Rose in a shocked whisper. "And Harry's mamma says it is such a dear little baby."

"She won't call it a 'de-e-ar' little baby—aggravating little creature—when she hears that it has lost her 'de-e-ar' little boy a medal, I can tell you."

"But, Nellie," remonstrated Josephine, "you accused me of talking in riddles a while ago, and

I am sure that you are doing it now. What can that poor little baby have to do with Harry not getting a medal?"

"Why, don't I tell you? If it had tumbled into the water, and Harry Rowe had fished it out, he could have been eligible for one; but as, instead, he saved it from being scrunched up by a train, he isn't eligible for anything."

"Except," said Miss Crofton slowly, "the loving admiration of all those who know him, or who hear of his gallant deed. But, of course, gold medals and parchments are to be prized far above that."

"No, they are not," was the abrupt contradiction. Then, with a blush, Helen added, "I beg your pardon, Madam; I did not mean to speak like that, but I think you are all rather hard on me to-day. It was not for Harry's sake, but for Miss Rowe's, that I wished him to get the medal. And the more love and admiration she and her mother give him, the more they would have rejoiced over that public acknowledgment of his deed; and—and—Miss Rowe did look so pleased when—— But please let me go now. I will come back soon."

And with that petition Helen escaped, and ran off to have a hearty cry by herself over her

disappointment and the disappointment of her former antagonist. She never had a harder task in her life than the self-appointed one which she performed that night, of writing to tell Miss Rowe the doleful news that the highly prized medals of the Royal Humane Society were given only for the rescue of people from the perils of the water, and that she had raised hopes not to be realised.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

“FOR THE SAKE OF ROSIE.”

“CLEAR decks for action! Land-lubbers, below hatches! Rose Bell and Clara Boswell, that means under the chairs. Be quick with you. Clear decks, I say! Now, one—two—three—hurrah! Three cheers for one, and cat-o’-nine-tails for two.”

The above commands had been delivered by a clear, ringing voice from one end of the large class-room of Crofton House, and between the utterance of the “one—two—three” and the “hurrah!” the owner of the voice, a certain slim, bright-eyed, curly-haired young damsel, had taken a rush down the room and a flying leap over the poker, laid across the backs of two chairs.

“Now, Rose,” exclaimed Milly Wilmot, “make haste; it’s your turn now. You know monkeys copy their masters.”

"Ah, to be sure," said the heroine of the jump. "So that is why you try to copy me."

The absurdity of roly-poly Milly being accused of copying Miss Nelly in looks, manners, or gymnastics was too great for even Sybil Pinckney's well-bred kindness; and as for Clara Boswell, ever since the commencement of the summer term she had been amongst the most inveterate aiders and abettors of those who combined to do all in their power to spoil the school favourite, Helen Edison.

"She cannot be spoiled. She is the brightest-tempered, noblest-hearted girl that ever lived," she declared; and so she laughed at all her jokes, applauded all her athletic feats, seconded all her petitions to the Principal, and had that splendid, all-important influence over her that a high-principled, well-cultivated girl always has over those whom she really admits to her true friendship.

And "winsome Nellie," as Mrs. Gray had nicknamed her, deserved the friendship. The meek and gentle teaching of Josephine Bell had fallen into good soil, and the sterner, stronger nature of Clara Boswell aided its development. Last, but not least, the trust confided to her of little Rose proved all that the friend and sister

had hoped in the way of restraint, and aid to good; and many of those who knew Helen best would have been surprised had they read the letters which passed between the two friends. The half-protecting, half-clinging love which the younger and more brilliant girl had bestowed upon her less talented companion bore most precious fruit, and each succeeding letter contained increasing proof that, while she was throwing much of brightness over the outer life of her friend, she herself was learning to share meek Josephine's most precious knowledge of the way of salvation and the paths of peace.

But if any one supposes that there was any great outward change visible in the school will-o'-the-wisp I am afraid they must be disappointed. That leap over the poker took place on the morning of the day before the summer holidays were to begin, or rather, it should be said, on the day before the pupils went home, for the last day at school was always a holiday at Crofton House—a day given up to packing, arranging books and cupboards, and generally saying good-bye to the ending term.

It was a little after ten now, and the half-dozen girls gathered together in the class-room

had been very busy upstairs till within the past few minutes. Their companions were all still engaged over boxes and portmanteaus—"Poor old slowcoaches," as Milly Wilmot irreverently termed them.

"Who'll jump next?" asked Helen, looking round at her companions with glances as scrutinisingly earnest as though she were a general organising a forlorn hope. And, if she expected any of those present to take the same jump she had just achieved, most people would have declared it was a very forlorn hope indeed. However, Rosie Bell and Rose Trew both came forward bravely as volunteers.

"Not you, Rosie," with a grave, reluctant shake of the head. "I have a foolish fancy in favour of delivering you up to Josephine to-morrow with unbroken legs and sound ankles. Rose Trew, you are much too pretty to break your nose against a poker. Besides, you have about a yard and a half of braid hanging to your dress already, and most of your hairpins ready to drop out. Putting those small matters right will be quite enough to keep *your* little hands out of mischief for the present. Kate Griffin might jump if she were not so busy over that story-book."

"Then you are reduced to me after all, Madame Nelly," laughed Milly Wilmot.

"In which case, ladies, the performance is at an end, seeing the proprietress of this establishment has not yet insured her ceilings and glass windows. At least——"

And Nelly suddenly sprang back over the poker, and with one bound to Clara Boswell's side.

"Clara! my tall, grand, dignified Clara!—my dear, departing schoolfellow, soon to be 'late of Crofton House,' do me this one final favour. Prove that you deserve, not only your riding-master's praises, but also those far more discriminating ones of Miss Helen Edison. Behold the poker; oblige me by passing over it with equal grace and nimbleness to the other side."

"You audacious little puss!" exclaimed a voice just inside the door, which had been opened a minute since unperceived. "You impudent little lassie! you will be inviting me next to have a see-saw with you, I should expect."

"Ah, dear Madam, I would take such care that you should not slip," was the laughing answer, as the girl ran forward to Miss Crofton and laid her cheek caressingly on her hand.

"At any rate, I won't tempt your promise," was the equally laughing reply. "But am I to understand that you six have quite finished your packing?"

"Quite, quite," was the answer in chorus, with the addition from Helen Edison, "Except that my box, the biggest one, is to be all turned out again."

"And pray wherefore?"

"Because it has aggravatingly puffed itself up somehow, so that, even with Milly Wilmot sitting on the lid, it won't shut. I have done up the straps, all the same; but, as Clara thinks that most of my things would tumble out during the journey if it travelled as it is, I am going to let her pack it for me over again."

"'Let her,' indeed!" said Miss Crofton, between amusement and earnestness. "You self-indulgent lassie!"

"Not self-indulgent this time," was the serious answer, somewhat contradicted by a tiny smile hovering over the crimson lips. "Clara asked me to let her pack for me. She said it broke her heart to see my clothes so cruelly ill-used. And I like her heart so much I could not bear to see it broken. But, please, will you tell us now what else you came in to

speak about? It was not only packing, I think."

No. Helen was right. The kind Principal had been standing a few minutes at her open window admiring the lovely summer day, and the thought had come to her that, although lovely summer days are happily by no means rare, whatever grumblers may say, still it was a pity that a party of young, happy girls should lose even one of them indoors.

With that pleasant incentive to brisk work, a picnic in the woods, packing was soon accomplished by even the most dilatory, and even Helen Edison's obstreperous box was coaxed into good behaviour under Clara Boswell's tidy and judicious treatment.

"What an untidy little creature Rosie Bell will grow up!" said Clara quietly, as Helen knelt beside her to refasten the straps.

"Untidy!" echoed Helen, turning her face quickly to her companion. "No, indeed, she shall not; I will take care of that. Josephine is the very pattern of tidiness, and it would vex her terribly to have Rose different."

"So I fear," said Clara once more quietly. "But example goes so much farther than precept. Rose loves you now almost as much

as she loves Josephine, and she admires you far more."

"Then she ought not, and she is a silly little thing."

"Just so. Such a silly little thing that she will consider the mere fact that her wonderful schoolfellow, Helen Edison, is untidy proves that untidiness is a virtue. If Miss Rowe had still been here, and you had still gone on defying her, poor little Rosie would have learnt to think that a fine thing to imitate too. But forgive me, Nelly, darling, you will think I am paying myself finely for the little bit of help I have given you. I did not mean to preach to you the last day we are together. You are not vexed, are you?"

Helen's answer was a queer one, as many of her answers were—"Clever Josephine! I would never have won the triumph of hearing you call me 'Nelly, darling,' but for her. For your sake and for hers Rosie shall learn to value tidiness."

"And for its own sake?"

"Umph," with a mischievous little smile. "Be quick and put your hat on. I'll show you such lovely little bits of untidiness in the woods and hedges to-day."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

A MEDAL AFTER ALL, AND SOMETHING MORE.

THE little town of Merton, with its beautiful old church, its sparkling river, and flourishing schools, is as pretty a town as any to be found within thirty miles of the metropolis. The only wonder is, as Mr. and Mrs. Bell remarked when they first saw it, that it is so little known. However, it was so little known a few years ago that the one little rustic, unpretending inn, the "George and Dragon," was, as a rule, quite sufficient to supply all the accommodation demanded by the better class of travellers.

Just on the outskirts of Merton stood the jessamine-covered cottage of the Rowses, and just beyond the outskirts of Merton, on the other side, were the house and grounds to which the friends were returned with whom Josephine and Rosa Bell had stayed when they first made acquaint-

ance with Mrs. Rowe. The little estate rented now by the Bells was in the same neighbourhood, and on one fine afternoon in August all these homes were in a state of great commotion.

No doubt the reader remembers a certain afternoon during the past Easter holidays, when Helen Edison was sorely distressed by hearing from her father that he had not the power to obtain the Royal Humane Society's medal for Harry Rowe. It may be also remembered, although Helen was too grieved to pay any attention to that at the time, that her father softened the intimation as much as he could, by writing his opinion that nevertheless something should be done for the little hero. As the weeks had passed on what this something should be had gradually taken a definite form. General and Mrs. Edison had travelled to Merton expressly to visit the family in whose welfare their only child took so great an interest, and their warmest sympathies were won as much by the widowed mother as by her manly little son, who shrank so modestly from the praises showered upon him for his deed.

From the Rowes' cottage the Edisons had driven to the Bells' place to see Miss Rowe and Josephine, and while there a long conversation

had been held of high interest to Helen's wishes, and Harry Rowe's future life.

Mr. and Mrs. Bell had so warmly agreed that something should be done for the boy that General Edison had fairly been wrought up to nearly the pitch of enthusiasm desired by his daughter, and before he left Merton Lodge he declared that he would not rest until he had secured for Harry some advantage more substantial than a bit of ribbon or a medal.

"But I don't think Helen will be quite satisfied without the medal," said Mrs. Edison, smiling.

"Perhaps she would like to present him with one herself," was the laughing answer.

As matters turned out, Nelly was not put to this trouble, and at the same time her desire as to a medal was fulfilled. The visits paid to the Rowes' cottage by the Bells, their friends the Andersons, and the Edisons, suddenly aroused Harry's townsfolk to the consciousness that he had performed a noteworthy action that it would be well, for their own credit's sake, to take some notice of.

The first idea of some town magnate, as ignorant on that point as Helen and Miss Rowe, had been to obtain for his young townsfellow a

medal decorated with the well-known letters "R. H. S." When he found that was impossible he exclaimed magnificently, "Then the town of Merton shall give a medal itself!"

"The town of Merton shall give a medal itself," echoed all his hearers in chorus, and with three cheers for the genius who had hit upon such a capital idea.

"And the town of Merton is a jolly little town, and deserves a pat on the back for its good sense," announced Nelly when her father called at Crofton House to tell her this piece of news.

"And the town of Merton is a most ridiculous little town," announced General Edison, "and my ridiculous young daughter deserves to be put in the corner for praising it, and for using the word 'jolly.' But, to reserve that matter for future grave consideration, let me give you the remainder of my budget of news, for my return train leaves in half an hour, and you will not have heard the quarter of what I have to tell. The giving of the medal, ornamented with the arms of the important town of Merton, is to be followed by a dinner, to be given to Mrs. Rowe and her son at the grand one-storey high hotel, the 'George and Dragon.' I tried to beg the poor child off that ordeal——"

“O papa!”

“Ay. ‘O papa,’ indeed. A child not eleven years old, and a shy child too, to have to sit up to be stared at and speechified at by a lot of old fog—well, a lot of kind-hearted but unreasonable individuals. But there, you are as bad as they are. And his sister—ay, actually his sister—with all her stern common sense—is worse than any of you. She literally quivered to the tips of her toes with delight when she was told of the honour to be done her brother.”

“I should think so,” was the emphatic answer. And then Miss Nelly crept close to her father and whispered, “That is just exactly how I quivered four years ago when they told me my father was to have the Victoria Cross. O papa! you don’t know what it is to be very, very proud of the people one loves.”

If General Edison did not know that, he at any rate knew how to be very indulgent to the fancies of those he cared for, and so far from putting any more obstacles in the way of the proposed ceremonies, he aided largely in giving them a certain element of dignity they would most assuredly have lacked without his efforts. Thus it came to pass that about a fortnight after the commencement of the Crofton House

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summer holidays the town of Merton was in an unwonted state of excitement, and the "George and Dragon Inn" in a tremendous state of bustling preparation.

Not only the kitchen powers of that modest establishment were being called upon to the utmost, but its sleeping accommodation also. Some unknown friends of General Edison's had arrived the night before, and the good-tempered landlady had been divided between rejoicing and bewilderment as to where to put them.

"Three of them, Jem!" as she murmured in dismay to her husband, "and each of them that grand, and to have a separate room!"

"Well then," answered Jem, "we can't do it, you know."

"But we must do it," was the positive answer. "Turn folks away once, and, you mark my words, they'll not come again. No, no. Put 'em up we must, if you have to build a room on the roof this night yourself."

"What? My gracious!" ejaculated red-haired Jem, in frightened amazement. "The woman's gone daft. Ye won't find me on the roof, not this night, nor any night, I can tell ye, not for all the fine gentlefolks in the world. I'll dinner them and I'll supper them, but if they

want rooms as I haven't got to give them, they may go elsewhere. They won't catch me doing monkey tricks for them ; no nor for nobody else, and so I tell you fairly."

"All right, Jem," said his wife, lifting her laughing face to his indignant one. "I'll not call upon you for the monkey tricks just yet awhile. All the same, you'll not think me quite so daft when you get the money, the day after to-morrow, which I shall have helped you to earn. And so now go supper the gentlemen, since ye agree to that part of the bargain, while I see to their beds. There's one thing, my places and linen are always sweet and clean, which they do say they are not always in London ; and for the rest I'll manage."

And the clever woman did manage, and so well for the comfort of her guests, that they audibly wondered the next morning at breakfast how they could have been so well housed in such a small inn.

"It's all my wife's doing, gentlemen," said Jem, in subdued tones. "She's clever as clever, she is. But it don't do to tell her so, you see, for she gets notions in her head sometimes, and she's a bit masterful."

With which oracular statement Jem glanced

up roofwards, and left the strangers to the enjoyment of their breakfast. About the same hour a very large party was gathered around the breakfast-table of the Bells. The Andersons, Clara Boswell, Milly Wilmot, Miss Crofton, good-natured little Fräulein, General and Mrs. Edison, and the Bells themselves of course.

The only absentee, of the group that might have been expected to be gathered together to do honour to that day, was the one who had looked forward to it with most eagerness.

"Where is your daughter, General?" asked Mrs. Anderson, in surprise, as she discovered her absence from the long table.

As she asked the question Helen Edison was standing in the Rowses' little sitting-room making fast friends at first sight with Harry Rowe, and re-tying his neck-ribbon for him, with the declaration that his sister had not made it half becoming enough.

"And you know, Harry, you are bound to do credit to us all and look your best, for you are the hero of the day."

"I wish I wasn't," Harry ventured to murmur, with a very heartfelt sigh, which Helen both literally and metaphorically strangled half-way, as she gave a sudden unintentional jerk to the

necktie, and exclaimed indignantly, "Oh, you bad boy! how dare you be so ungrateful? And such a beautiful day as it is going to be, too. I'm ashamed of you."

"It would be a whole heap more beautiful," muttered the incorrigible, "if you and I were going to spend it together fishing on the river. That would be really nice now, and you would not have to bother about this tie either. It does seem to be an awfully difficult one to settle."

"You may well say that," was the rueful reply. "I don't think it is any use bothering about it any more. It's got into a knot now, and looks just anyhow. I'm sure I don't know what to do with the horrid thing."

At this point Mrs. Rowe came to the rescue, produced another length of blue ribbon, untied the knotted one, and five minutes later the little party of five sat down to a meal which was made a very merry one by the uninvited guest. Thanks to her, before that breakfast was over Harry had got rid of much of the terror which that day had had for him for some weeks past.

At two o'clock all our friends, the three strangers staying at the "George and Dragon," a dozen or two of the Merton magnates, and a

miscellaneous crowd of sightseers, all assembled with praiseworthy punctuality in the Town Hall. Foremost amongst the spectators was a smiling young woman, with a little girl in her arms dressed gorgeously in a new scarlet frock and white hat with a scarlet feather.

"I do like a bit of bright colour for a child," she remarked confidentially to a neighbour.

"Ay, indeed," answered the neighbour back. "And only to think if it hadn't been for that dear little lad it's not much like bright colours as you'd ha' been feeling yourself to-day. But it was a nice thought of you to put the little maid into a new frock in his honour."

"It wasn't my doing," said the mother, smiling. "Though I would have done it too. The things were all a gift from a young lady, sent through that dear, kind Miss Bell. Miss Bell has promised I shall thank the young lady myself. But, look—look—there they come! Good Master Rowe himself. Bless his heart, but he do look frightened, the dear lamb! A great deal more frightened than when he saved my Minnie. And there's his poor mother! The dear Lord has blessed the widow in her boy, hasn't He? And there's Miss Rowe, grand and stately, to be sure; that she is always; but she

is white, ain't she. She always was a good daughter and a good sister. And there—oh, there is a bonny face for you! Of all the pretty young ladies as ever I saw I never see one to beat her."

And so thought Josephine and Rosa Bell, and Clara Boswell and Milly Wilmot. And so thought Miss Crofton and Fräulein, and General and Mrs. Edison. And so thought most of the spectators in the Town Hall as all eyes rested for some moments on slim, tall Helen Edison, her cheeks flushed crimson, her dark eyes glowing, all of self forgotten in another's triumph. It was true she was a hero-worshipper, but she was very keen in separating real claims from those of impostors.

One of the three strangers, a fine white-haired old gentleman, especially noticed her as she walked up the hall with the Rowes, and he bent forward and addressed a question to General Edison, sitting near him on the platform.

"Yes," answered the General, smiling; "yes, Sir Edward, that is my daughter—the young maiden who was so anxious that little Rowe should be decorated with one of our Society's medals."

"Thank you," said Sir Henry; and then he

sank back in his chair and turned his eyes once more back to Miss Nelly, and looked thoughtful. After a few minutes he held a short whispered conversation with one of his companions, who also then glanced quickly at Helen Edison, turned back to his friend with a smiling nod and the significant remark, "A capital idea of yours. She looks well fitted to be the young queen of the occasion."

But although one or two people heard the words they were as electrified as was Helen herself, and all the rest of this assemblage, when, after Harry Rowe had been duly decorated with the Town Medal, the gentleman called Sir Henry rose, and, laying his hand on the child's shoulder to detain him on the platform, made the following short speech :—

"Mr. Chairman, my Ladies and Gentlemen, —Some few months ago, as you have all just been told in most elegant language, this brave boy here saved a fellow-creature's life at the imminent risk of his own. A young lady heard of the deed, and with just enthusiasm declared that he deserved a medal as a lifelong testimony to his noble courage. Unfortunately the medal she set her heart upon his obtaining was that of the Royal Humane Society, of which

her father, I, and my two friends here are members. Our awards, as, no doubt, most of you know, are given for rescues from drowning and other sea dangers. When the young lady in question learnt this unwelcome fact she expressed a wish, I am told, that the baby had been so obliging as to fall into the water instead of under a train. To prove to her that this change of accident was unnecessary, and to show her that, although as a body our marks of approval are restricted, yet as human beings our sympathies with grand actions are as free as her own, we and some other members of our Society have ventured to offer her for bestowal upon her hero the packet I have here. And if Miss Edison has as much pleasure in giving and Henry Rowe in receiving the gift, as we have in the presentation, our satisfaction will be complete."

With his last words, and amidst a perfect tempest of applause from all the assembled Mertonites, Sir Henry stepped from the platform, gently led crimson-faced Nelly up with him beside her father, and, placing a packet in her trembling fingers, bade her open it, and do as she would with the contents.

It was a work of time to untie even a bow,

unwrap a covering of brown paper, and a second of silver tissue-paper, and unclasp a morocco case, with all those eyes fixed upon her; but it was done at last, and then Helen suddenly forgot shyness in admiration, and exclaimed, "O Harry, how beautiful! This is ever so much better than a medal. I wonder if there is any writing inside."

And when the outer case of the beautiful gold watch was opened it was found that there was writing inside, that is to say, an engraved inscription; and, with bright tears of gladness shining in her eyes, Helen passed the chain over Harry's neck more cleverly than she had tied his neck-ribbon, and put the presentation watch in his pocket. Half an hour later the dinner party was seated around the long flower-adorned table at the "George and Dragon;" and Harry was not the youngest guest present after all, for at Sir Henry's suggestion the little rescued child was there also, with her mother, in all the splendour of the scarlet frock given her by Helen. The entertainment itself was not half such an awful and solemn affair as General Edison had anticipated; but, nevertheless, all our immediate friends were well pleased to find themselves soon after six o'clock gathered together for tea and

strawberries on the Bells' lawn. Of course the Rowes were there, all of them, including Harry's elder brother, who had come home the previous day to rejoice in his young brother's triumph.

And during the course of that happy evening other gifts were bestowed upon the Rowes—gifts that the three elders of the family knew how to esteem even more highly than gold watches and the medal of the self-important little town of Merton.

Josephine Bell had not lost sight of the fact that Miss Rowe was sorely anxious on the score of procuring good education for her little brother, and through her intercession a nomination to Merchant Taylors' had been given to her father by a friend, to present to whom he would. Thus in the afternoon Helen Edison had the pleasure of adorning Harry with a gold watch; at night Josephine had the happiness of giving news to his mother and sister that his education was provided for. Each helped to confer the gift they could best appreciate.

"And how do you get on yourself now, Josie, with that learning which you think so much of?" asked Helen later in the evening, drawing her friend away with her to a far corner for a quiet chat.

"Do you still find it all pain and struggle, as you said once at Crofton House?"

Josephine smiled brightly. She could smile now. The heaviness had gone from her eyes and the pallor from her cheeks.

"No, Nelly, it is not all pain and struggle now indeed! It is still hard work sometimes to understand as much in things as other people appear able to do; but Miss Rowe says that my rapid improvement ought to be sufficient reproof to me for grumbling at that. You cannot imagine what a wonderful difference the quietude of home makes to me, and the having the undivided patient attention of Miss Rowe. I used to spend days sometimes—yes, Nelly, really days—in puzzling over some tiresome little trifle which Miss Rowe can now teach me to understand in as many minutes."

Helen looked thoughtful. "Yes," she said quietly, "Miss Crofton is quite right. School is the only place for some girls—girls like me, for instance, who are learning to think themselves perfect and all-important at home. But for girls like you, whose whole object in life is to put themselves on one side, Miss Crofton says, and I say, school is a mistake. There are so many people there ready to put them on one side that

at last they creep into a bush altogether, and get smothered, as you were nearly doing when I first——”

Nelly stopped abruptly.

“Finish your sentence, Nelly,” said Josephine softly. “When you first came and rescued me. Without your bright encouragement and ready help I should never have got out of that ‘slough of despond.’”

“Hush, Josie,” whispered Helen; “don’t you know I am trying to learn humility. You will spoil it all. Good-night now, dear, and God bless you, Josie, for teaching me the way to Christ’s footstool. Don’t forget; I will always be your schoolgirl as long as you will be my mistress.”

THE END.

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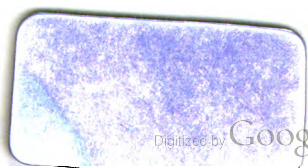
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After floating many years in the upper regions of the air, I found myself resting on the cheek of a beautiful child. He was sleeping beneath the shade of a large tree, which sheltered him from the scorching rays of the sun. All was glad around ; one object alone marred the beauty of the scene. A hideous wolf glared from the thicket upon him. Affrighted, I sped to other climes ; in the northern regions, I lay buried in a mass of ice many long years ; being released from these bonds, I alighted on the cheek of a hardy sailor. He laid him down on the cold, *cold* snow and slept, while I (and the remembrance saddens me,) joined with my companions in casting our icy chains around him. He slept alone—that sleep was his last. Our cold forms rested on his weather-beaten brow, and he knew it not. The bright sun released us, and I was wafted to the milder shores of Britain. I fell lightly, in dew, upon the velvet fields of England ; I roved in mist over the wild hills of Scotland ; I rested a diamond sparkling in the first beams of the morning sun upon the dark heather, and I leaped down their rocky hills in a joyous stream. I have sat upon the tartan of the brave chieftain Rob Roy ; and I was present when, in the darkness of night, the traitor Macbeth, with stealthy step approached the bed-side, and murdered the sleeping gray-haired Duncan, and the one deep groan, sent a pang to the very soul of the hardened wretch. I sat upon the hand of the proud queen Elizabeth ; she was surrounded by courtiers, who would have thought it the highest honor to have been permitted even to kiss the place whereon I rested. I was present when Essex gave the magic ring to be presented to his queen, and also when the vengeance of that queen descended upon the faithless, ill-fated messenger. Disgusted, I committed myself to the flying winds, and beheld the wild Arab as he swiftly traversed his boundless domains, joying in his own strength and freedom. I reposed on the feather of the sultan's turban, and I fell from thence upon the face of a pale Grecian captive. I met the Czar Peter, in

lands far distant from his own, and, in a garb ill-befitting a mighty sovereign, and was present when by one wan glittering taper, the ambitious Catherine plotted the murder of her husband. I saw the great Gustavus, when for the first time he led his soldiers to glory and to victory ; and Frederic, when alone he withstood the united forces of the most powerful emperors. I imparted new vigor to Richard ' Cœur de lion,' when wearied and almost exhausted on the burning plains of the east. I rested in the folds of the flowing toga of Cicero, when, by his overpowering eloquence, he caused the blush of conscious shame and guilt to give a still darker hue to the dark countenance of the conspirator Catiline ; and when by one word he brought to light the intruder upon the mysteries of the ' Bona Dea.' I sat on the cap of the leader of a band of Roman horsemen. His was a noble soul, made to command. He led on his men as unused to aught but victory. I saw that form, which once bore itself so proudly, extended on the sand, a disfigured and bloody corse. I rolled in the dark flood, in which, in the blackness of night, the mysterious Lara plunged his unholy burden. I descended among the torrents that overwhelmed the vessel of the Corsair, and I saw the endless and fearful wanderings of the doomed Mazeppa. I saw the all-beautiful, and injured Mary Stuart, when, in the pride of youth and loveliness, she stood the bride of Francis. Dissolved in mist, I helped to conceal her from the English fleet, as she returned to her native land, and was present when she first stepped on that shore which was to witness so much misery. I saw the look of *unfeigned* astonishment and horror, with which she first heard of the dreadful death of Darnly. I rested on her brow to soothe her agitated feelings, when departing from the hated Douglas castle. She raised her hand, and all her hopes were dashed to the ground. I attended her, in her long and dreary imprisonment in the castle of Elizabeth ; and when the last sad tragedy was acted, moistened the cheek of many a fair maid and brave warrior. I have bedewed the tomb of the friend of Wallace, and sighed that a friendship so holy should have been thus rudely broken. Grieved, I fled from the spot. I sought the great and good Washington. I was with him when he fought for the liberties of his country ; I saw him on his death-bed, when his pure spirit peacefully winged its way to the presence of its God. I fell from the plume which drooped so gracefully over the noble

brow of the proud Napoleon, upon the dimpled hand of his beautiful boy. Nor did I pass unheeded, the elegant retreat of the graceful Josephine. I saw her take her last farewell of the weeping Hortense, and of the brave Eugene. I was borne to the land of Patagonian giants, and witnessed a horrid sacrifice, a human victim slain on the altar. I visited the depths of the dark mines of Peru, and there saw misery in its most loathsome forms. As I entered the damp, dismal dungeons of the Inquisition, a thrill of horror passed through my frame, as I felt the *thick* darkness *crawl* slowly over me. There I beheld scenes that would chill the blood of any but a monster. Often have I cooled the brow, wrung with agony, and rested soothingly upon the pale cheek of the victim of the rack. There I saw a noble innocent youth, condemned to suffer. I gazed upon his bold features, and saw his lip compressed with agony. The blood rapidly came and fled from his face. The dark auburn locks, which clustered around his broad forehead, were damped by the cold drops wrung forth by intensest anguish. I could bear it no longer, but concealed myself in the depths of the ocean. But there too I beheld sights which would cause the blood of a mortal to run cold. I saw a beautiful Mermaid, as she sat in her coral cave, and her long tresses mingled wildly with the waters. A strain of soul-thrilling melody arose. It was borne by the wave, to the ear of an unwary girl. She sat carelessly on a rock, watching the approach of a long-expected vessel. Slowly she loosed her hold of the rock, and slid into the deep. The Mermaid's arm received her, and with a wild shriek of triumph, she laid her on a *cold* couch. I remained, but never again did that form arise, never did those eyes awake from their death-like slumber ; for nightly did the witching chant of the syren arise beside her, the bonds were severed, and she forever lay a breathing corse. I saw a beautiful boy ; he fell from the deck of a vessel ; I watched by him, as he lay on a bed of pearls ; diamonds glistened beneath him—he was surrounded by gems, and masses of untold gold. The cold waters glided coldly over his pale face, and nothing remained but his whitening bones. A serpent coiled in his skull, and glared out at his eyes. I arose and fled to bear relief to the severed brow of his mother. Her spirit departed, bemoaning the loss of its lovely idol—her beautiful boy.

H.

THE AFFECTIONATE SISTER.

A TALE.

ROSE Aleyn sat at her needlework, in the arbor at the end of the garden; it was early in a summer's morning; the clock in the church tower had just struck six, and she lifted up her sweet face while she counted the chimes. Awhile she sat silent in the calm of her happy thoughts; and then the mirth of her light heart danced out into singing. She hardly knew the song that her soft voice had chosen but her rejoicing humor gave a just expression to each little word. Footsteps fell lightly on the green-sward about that pleasant arbor; and Rose Aleyn never dreamed that any one was near her; she heard only her own song; or rather the murmur, not the words of the song, prevented her hearing any other sound. 'She is a winsome young creature,' said the old gardener, 'and as fresh as a rose.' He stood awhile to gaze upon her, as she sat in the arbor he had woven for her, all wreathed over with the broad-leaved hop and the odorous honeysuckle with deep blushing moss-roses and pale white roses hanging in clusters about its green sides, and wild thyme and ground-ivy under her little feet. It was a hot morning, and the old man wiped his brow with his shirt sleeve, as he shaded his eyes with his arm; it was very hot, but his young mistress looked as cool and fresh as any dewy blossom around her; quickly moved her small white fingers at her needlework, and the bold sun only pierced through the foliage with a twinkling splendor; though it seemed as if the breeze playfully struggled with the green leaves to let in more of the golden light, stirring all the while the careless curls upon her brow, as if teaching her to feel less sensibly the ardent sunshine. The young girl started up, and the color mounted in her cheek, as the old man spoke to her with his low quiet voice: 'There's a man and horse at the gate, Mistress Rose, and he brings a letter for you; and he will give it into no hands but yours.' Rose ran off in a moment to the front of the house, and down the old avenue. There stood the man with the letter, and when he had given it into the girl's own hand, he leaped upon his horse, and galloped off. She looked at the direction, and wondered why her friend Winifred had sent her letter in so strange a manner. She returned then to the willow arbor, and sat down to read the letter. She did not scream, she did not faint, as her eye glanced over the paper; but she sat motionless, as if every faculty had suddenly deserted her. At last she read the letter again:—

'Sweet Rose—I would have thee come hither with all haste, and may God speed thee: for thy brother Frank, his life is in danger. He hath been taken by the king's troops, and they will hang him if they please; and so indeed they threaten in two days to do. Sweet friend, more eyes are red than thine, more hearts are aching sorely, but come here, make no delay. Thou canst do nothing

where thou art, at least thou canst see thy brother and comfort him here; so come, I pray thee; and God comfort both him and thee. Thy loving sister,

'WINIFRED LANGLAND.'

The thoughts of Rose Aleyn were now strangely bewildered. At once not only her morning cheerfulness, but all the calmness of her mind, was gone, and she sat in her arbor, trembling in every limb, and weeping bitterly. 'May the blessed God give me strength and wisdom,' said the poor girl; and she wiped the tears from her face, and then passed quickly to her own chamber. For a little while she remained there, with the door locked; and then came out with a calm look and a quiet step. Rose found her grandmother already in the little walnut-tree parlor, and the servants were standing near the door, waiting for her attendance at family prayers; so the child knelt down while her grandmother blessed her and kissed her fair forehead. Then the large Bible was opened, and Rose read aloud a chapter from Isaiah, and prayed in a voice which filtered only at a few words.

'Now,' said the young girl, when she was left alone with her grandmother, 'now we have read the book of God, and prayed for his grace to guide us all through the day, I must tell thee very grievous news, grandmother; a man and horse have been here this morning, with a letter from Winifred Langland. And may God help us, for my brother Frank is taken, and they will hang him in two days.' The old lady at first spoke not a word, but lifted up both her thin bony hands, while her pale lips quivered with anguish. 'Go on,' she said, 'child, let me hear all.' 'There is nothing more to tell,' replied Rose, 'at least my friend says nothing more of Frank. I will read her letter to thee.'—'Frank Aleyn must die then,' said the old lady, after a long pause—'My own beautiful bold boy must die upon the shameful gallows.' 'O no! he must not, *shall* not die,' cried Rose, and she stopped suddenly in her speech, for she knew not how to proceed. 'And how should we save him, my poor child? Do we not hear of too many such deaths? How fared it with the prisoners at Bridgewater, within the last month? were they not all butchered with cold blooded cruelty? Were not their dying pangs mocked with jesting and music? If our sweet Frank be in the hands of that savage colonel, and I fear he is, it will go hard with him and us. My poor maiden, you are young enough to hope in any case, but I am near my grave now; I have lived many years and seen strange changes. I put little trust in man; but the blessed God bringeth wondrous things to pass; we must look to him, my child, for he will direct all in his best way; and we may trust with a perfect faith; for his ways may seem at first dark to us.' Rose listened attentively to her grandmother, but, when she had finished

speaking, said eagerly, 'Would you not send me to Winifred Langland?'—'Most assuredly, my love; we will bid Richard Pearse be at the door in half an hour, with the horse and pillion, and you may be at Taunton by twelve o'clock at noon.' The horse and pillion waited a few minutes at the door, while the old lady finished a letter which she was writing. 'You will give this letter,' she said to Rose, 'to the commanding officer, whoever he may be, that has pronounced the judgment of death upon our dear Frank Aleyn. An old woman can have little influence with a stern soldier, and I know not if he may look upon my letter; but the simple pleading of the heart is often heard before wisdom; or, perchance he may reverence my gray hairs.' Rose thought the letter would be successful, for she had been accustomed to hear all her grandmother's requests with attentive deference, and to obey them instantly, and so she rode off, presuming, in the simplicity of her heart, to hope that her brother's life might yet be spared. Many hopes and many fears, however, arose in her bosom, with their alternate emotions, before she reached Taunton. Almost every visit which Rose had made to her friend Winifred had been a sort of holiday-keeping to them both. She hardly remembered the first time that she had gone to Taunton, she had then been so young; for her own mother was in her lifetime, as a sister to Mrs. Langland; and their fathers had fought and fallen side by side. The troubles of the times had then made many widows; and the mother of Rose Aleyn, always a pale sickly young creature, hung her head from the moment she heard of her husband's death, and died in the third month of her widowhood. Rose had known little sorrow, for her grandmother was really religious, and therefore very cheerful; still her merriest moments had been passed with Winifred Langland, a person of her own age, and the maiden she loved best in the world. Her heart throbbed quick as she beheld the town of Taunton. Her eye marked out the whole of the town and the surrounding country, and she felt with grief how near she was to her brother, while she could not at once seek his presence.

The day was very sultry as Rose entered Taunton. Few persons but soldiers were in the streets; insolent looking fellows, who swaggered and lounged about, as if conscious of their own vulgar importance. Rose was frightened by their bold looks and she drew her sad-colored hood half over her face to escape their notice. She arrived, however, without any mishap, at the house of Mrs. Langland. Winifred kissed her friend, as she welcomed her into the house, but said nothing for some minutes. Her face was deadly pale, and her soft eyes swam with tears.

They proceeded at once to the parlor, in which the family usually sat. There they found Mrs. Langland and her brother, a middle-aged single gentleman, who always resided with her. Mrs. Langland received Rose with much affection; and Master Bryan Roper, rising up laid down his book, and kissed her cheek. The beloved friends among whom Rose sat down did not attempt to console her with false hopes; they told her very plainly, that there seemed little hope of Frank Aleyn's life, every exertion had been already made by Master Bryan Roper, but without any success: he had not even

been permitted to see the prisoner. 'And shall I not see my brother?' said Rose, 'shall I never see him again?'

Mrs. Langland and her brother replied only by looks of grave sadness, but Winifred half rose from her seat; the color deepened on her cheek; she did not speak, but clasped her hands together, and sobbed aloud. 'I cannot rest,' said Rose, after she had sat for some time, in silent thought, 'I cannot rest, while Frank Aleyn lives; but God help me, for I have no heart to hope now.'

That very morning Master Bryan Roper, had sought an interview with Colonel Kirk (for that man was indeed the savage judge of Frank Aleyn,) but admittance was positively refused to his presence. It was however agreed (for what else could be done,) that Rose should herself go immediately to the residence of Colonel Kirk, and, if possible, present with her own hand the letter from her aged grandmother. Rose walked with Mrs. Langland to the street where Colonel Kirk had taken up his residence, and Master Bryan Roper followed behind them at a considerable distance, to watch if his presence would be required; many times he came forward, for the soldiers who loitered about often stopped to stare boldly at the beautiful maid as she passed along. However, her way was not impeded, and she knocked at the door of the house. It was immediately unclosed, and the two females were admitted. They entered a small court, partly surrounded by the house in which Colonel Kirk resided: the principal entrance was on the right side, and there Rose and her companion had still to wait. That house had been well known to Rose Aleyn, for a friend of her grandmother had lived there till her decease, which event had taken place but a year before. The change about the house appeared very striking to Rose. She had last stood in that court when all was there in neat and quiet order; the little grassplot now displayed none of the smooth and lively green it then wore, the vine now hung in wild and careless luxuriance; from the walls on which it had been then trained with beautiful exactness. On the left side of the court, a sort of arcade or cloister extended through an arch, leading to the garden behind the house: this archway passed through the inner front of the house. The arcade was closed in by a low balustrade, surmounted by stone vases, then filled with fine exotic plants in blossom; a few of those plants yet remained there, quite withered, and the rest of the vases were thrown down, and lay scattered about the court. Mrs. Langland and Rose stood waiting for the servant, who had left them to inform his master of their presence. The man had told them that they would not be admitted, but Rose waited there in anxious hope to find some way of entrance. She was determined that force alone should drive her away, before she had seen the man on whom her brother's life depended. The servant had not returned, when the noise of loud laughter sounded near, and three young officers entered the arcade from the arched passage leading to the garden. When they perceived the women, they stopped; and one of them came forward, with an air of affected deference, and requested to know for whom they were inquiring. He had not been able to take a full view of Rose

Aleyn's features; and as he continued speaking to Mrs. Langland in the same tone of pretended humility, the whole attention of his insolent look was fixed on the timid girl, who hung down her head, and turned away, blushing with indignation at his impertinence. His two companions came nearer, laughing loudly, and joking in coarse and noisy language; but Rose turned towards the door, which now opened. The servant appeared, and brought a positive denial from his master. Rose forgot the insolence of the young officers, and appealed to them at once, saying, 'Gentlemen, I ask you, as men of honor, to befriend me. My brother, young Frank Aleyn, will be hung if you do not.' The young men were taken by surprise, as Rose turned her beautiful face upon them, and spoke in her sweet fearless voice. They looked at each other with confusion of countenance, and one of them instantly went into the house. In a few minutes an upper casement was thrown open. Rose looked up, and beheld a dark-visaged man, leaning out. 'Are you the child,' he said, 'that would see Colonel Kirk?'—'Yes, yes, indeed I am,' she replied, 'pity me, and spare my brother's life.' 'Not so fast, my pretty maid; but tell me,' he added, 'what your companion may wait for?'—'She is my friend—she was my mother's friend, and she came with me because I am a young and unprotected girl, now my poor brother is in prison.' The servant was ordered to admit the ladies, and they followed him, through some long passages to a parlor, where Rose had often sat in happier days. There the man left them, and returning soon after, said, 'My master will only see the younger gentlewoman.' 'And not my friend also?' said Rose, clinging to the arm of Mrs. Langland, as she thought upon the dark and savage features of Colonel Kirk. 'My master will only see the sister of the prisoner.' Rose forgot her fearfulness, when she heard her brother mentioned as a prisoner, and rising up, she followed the man from the room. Colonel Kirk was sitting alone at a table, on which were some half empty flagons of wine, and many wine glasses; the chairs of his companions remained in the places where their occupiers had sat. He motioned Rose to sit down in one of those chairs. She did so, and the servant quitted the room. The young girl was abashed by the gaze of Kirk, who said nothing, but filled a glass with wine, and held it out to her. 'Thank you, sir,' she said, 'but indeed I cannot drink wine just now. You were so kind as to admit me to your presence, and therefore I can give you, with my own hand, this letter from my grandmother.' Colonel Kirk was struck by the very simple manner of the young girl who stood before him; and, with a feeling of curiosity, he took the letter from her hand and read it through. Rose watched his features, but turned sick at heart when she saw a smile almost like derision on them. All her hope fell at once; she had expected so much from the effect of that letter, that when she saw it had failed (for if it had not failed, he could not have smiled on a letter written from a heart full of love and tenderness; when she knew it had failed, she stood speechless and confounded before him. 'There, child,' he said, 'take it.' Rose hardly understood what he said. 'Take your grandmother's letter.' She took it slowly, and still stood trembling and in

silence before him. 'My brother, sir, my poor brother,' she cried at length, 'will you not save him?'—'Your brother, child, must die.' 'Oh, no, stop, sir, stop,' she added, as if trying to prevent his saying more, 'you can save him if you will; I know you are master here.' 'Well, girl,' he replied, 'I will not *say* any more, as you wish it; surely I have said enough.' He rose up, and would have turned away, but she caught his arm, and clung to it, and looked into his face with her beautiful and dovelike eyes, while she entreated him to stay, to speak again, with any words, but not to leave her. Colonel Kirk did stay; he looked kindly on the gentle girl, and clasped tenderly in his own the soft white hands which still clung to him. He spoke soothingly to her, but Rose trembled still more, as he continued speaking. 'There is one way, my beautiful maiden,' he said, 'by which your brother may be saved; *you* may save him.' Rose uttered a cry of joy; 'Tell me, tell me at once,' she cried, 'how I can save him? Can I save him? Will God bless me in making me the means of his safety?' He pressed her hand more closely, and looked earnestly at her. He spoke in a whisper, but Rose heard every word; she heard *how* she might save her brother's life, and the natural feeling of a woman made her free herself at once from his grasp, and look at him steadfastly with a look of scornful contempt. The wretch was not easily repulsed; he would have seized her hand again, and he did repeat the shameful request he had made. The insulted virgin could not conceal her passionate indignation. 'Beast,' she exclaimed, 'rather than man, touch me not.' Was it for this you consented to see me? I fear you not; I will die with my brother, for he would never live for such infamy. Ah! it is Colonel Kirk that I am speaking to; and I knew it before. Why did I come hither, for I knew how many wretches shudder at your name—how many homes are spoiled of their best hopes. I was a fool to come begging here. There is no hope for Frank Aleyn with such a monster.' Colonel Kirk had sat down, and he stared at her with a look of impertinent surprise. 'Now,' he said 'my little maiden, when you have done with all that pretty passion, and talked yourself cool, I would beg you to remember that you have done no good by all this rage; you might, indeed, my dear, have injured your brother's cause very seriously, had I been of as kindling a disposition as yourself. Take it quietly; you cannot judge calmly when you put yourself in these passions. Is your brother to die or to live? Methinks he is very young, and perchance somewhat wild. He may not have thought much and seriously on death, and this is a consideration not to be passed over; if you remember, your grandmother talks in a very sensible and religious style about his "dying in the sinful thoughtlessness of his youth." Shall he die, or will his sister save him?' Rose was no longer violent; she began to think almost calmly on her brother's state, and though she despised even more entirely the fellow who addressed her, his words had recalled her to doubt and fearfulness. She stood before him, lost in thought, till the confusion of her feelings subdued her, and tears streamed fast over her face. 'Oh! sir,' she cried out in frantic grief, as she threw herself at his feet, 'forgive and pity a poor wretch

like me; I am so wretched that I know not what I say. Yes, yes, I do know what to say; we will both forget what has passed, and you will save my brother. You've spoken thus to try me, I know you have, and you are pleased with the indignation which I have shown most hastily: you love the honest anger of insulted modesty.' 'I do, indeed,' replied he, as he rose up and approached her. Rose blushed with shame at her own deceit, for she well knew that his infamous proposal was meant to be taken in one horrid sense only. With difficulty she stood without shuddering, and listened to his words. With difficulty she replied to them, still seeming not to understand him, till his dark face burned with crimson, and he said, in a voice of loud rage, 'Girl, you dare to trifle with me: get you gone. Your brother shall die, and that tomorrow morning.' He did not reach the door, for Rose, wild with the anguish of conflicting passions, had thrown herself down upon the ground, and clung to him, struggling with all her force to detain him. Oh, with what moving words did she implore him, even as if gasping for her soul's life. 'Say what you will,' she cried out loudly, 'I will hear you now, as if your speech were blessings. Do what you will with me, but set Frank Aleyn at liberty. Oh, God of holiness!' she said, smiting her brow with her open hand, 'that I should pray upon my knees for shame, for infamy. My heart is bursting in my bosom. Oh! do hear me, do answer me at once. Save my brother—I am all you ask!' Colonel Kirk lifted up the poor maiden, who lay motionless at his feet. He threw back the long shining ringlets which had fallen dishevelled over her face; and he kissed repeatedly the pallid cheeks, all stained with tears, and the cold quivering lips, and the lids which had dropped down heavily over her dark eyes. He threw open the window and stood before it, supporting in his arms her senseless form. She began to move, to draw in her breath deeply, to shiver and tremble, and then a shower of tears gushed from her eyes. When she looked around her, and saw on whom she leaned, she pushed him from her, but instantly she recollected herself, and entreated his forgiveness. She looked at him in silence for a few moments, and then, still holding his arm, she said, 'You have terrified me very much but have mercy for a little while, and hear me say a few, a very few words. Promise me before I speak. I give myself up into your power. Hear only a few words.' He did promise, and the poor young creature sunk down on her knees before him, and raising up her hands in supplication, said—'I entreat you by the living God, who now looks upon us both; I entreat you for the sake of our never dying souls—for the sake of Him who suffered for our sins, not to commit this dreadful wickedness. We must stand together at the last day before a God in judgment. How will He look upon us then, if we thus boldly sin before Him? This is no time to talk of modesty and female bashfulness. I would go much further, and speak of the soul and the damnation of hell. Solemnly then I beseech you to let me die in my brother's place. Alas! I am a weak, sinful creature, and too unfit to die; but I have long thought upon another world, and prayed every day in my Savior's name. It is better for me to die than for young Frank Aleyn to

be cut off in all his thoughtlessness, and with the sins of his youth unrepented of and unforsaken. The life that is forfeited will then be taken, and my soul, our souls, may be spared for Heaven. You have heard me speak. I thank you and have done. What is your answer?' Colonel Kirk looked at her full in the face, and answered in a tone of calm decision by one word—'No.' Rose said nothing more. She arose at once from her knees, and stood before him, with her head bowed upon her bosom. Colonel Kirk now spoke again of his infamous proposal; he named an hour of appointment for that night, and Rose said not a word of refusal. She took at once the key which he gave into her hand, and she listened with apparent calmness to his directions. 'And my brother shall not die,' said she when he had finished speaking, 'let me hear you promise thus again.' 'He shall not die,' replied Colonel Kirk, in a solemn and deliberate voice. 'Thank God! thank God!' said the poor bewildered girl, clasping her hands together. 'One more favor,' she exclaimed, sinking again at his feet, 'allow me to see him; let me go to him immediately.' 'This request I must refuse for many reasons,' said he; 'tomorrow he will be at liberty; wait till then; you shall certainly see him tomorrow morning.' Rose Aleyn returned to the apartment where she had left her friend. Mrs. Langland was touched to the heart by the anguish too visible in her countenance; and as Rose approached, she held out her arms to her, and the poor maiden sunk upon her bosom without speaking. 'Alas!' said Mrs. Langland, 'I had not dared to hope—you need not tell me, for I see too well how fruitless this visit has been.' Rose could not lift up her face, but she said, with a faint and faltering voice, 'My agitation has misled you; Frank Aleyn is spared: tomorrow morning he will be at liberty.'

They returned home, and the lively joy of her friends almost agonized the miserable girl. At first Mrs. Langland and Winifred wept with the agitation of unrestrained delight; but they soon began to ask an explanation, to question her about her interview with Colonel Kirk. Rose knew not how to answer them. 'Do not ask me any more questions,' she said at length, 'do not ask me till tomorrow, I beseech you, for I must not reply. Then you will know why I cannot reply at present; then my own brother will be free.' They began to speak of happiness, and they smiled with calm delight as they spoke. Poor Rose tried to smile also; but her secret pressed like a deadening weight upon her heart, and she could not speak of happiness. She withdrew herself as frequently as possible from their society; but she was almost maddened with the distraction of her feelings, when the hour arrived of separation for the night. Another hour had passed away, and Rose, unsuspected and undiscovered, had quitted the house. It was a mild and moonlight night, when she stole along the streets on the side where the shadows lay dark and broad. She soon turned away into a narrow lane, closed in on each side by high walls; and with both her trembling hands she unlocked a small door on the left side. How often had Rose, played, in the happy carelessness of childhood, about the beautiful garden which she now entered. Many recollections

which would once have brought delight with them, came, blighted and dead, over her heart, and she hurried swiftly onward; but when she reached the door, she stopped a little while before she could enter the house. She turned away, and looked back upon the garden and the fields beyond, now all reposing in the silvery moonshine; and as she stood gazing there, she half resolved to flee away far over the quiet fields, and never return again to those whom she loved; so that she might never hear of her brother again, and never see him, till all doubt and terror had passed away, and they were both in a less miserable world.

Many strange thoughts and wild wishes passed over her mind, and once, in the hopelessness of her agony, she called aloud upon God for help; but she then shuddered with terror at her impiety; for the bare idea of prayer from her, situated as she then was, seemed an insult to the God of purity. She returned to the door—it closed upon her. Who shall attempt to imagine the horrors of that night? Ere it passed away, the poor heart-broken girl heard a sound of knocking, which seemed to proceed from the close beneath the chamber windows; the noise roused her, but she had not then the power of thinking. Once only she unclosed her eyes; it was morning; for rays of rich light streamed into the chamber through the crevices of the closed shutters. She wished for a perpetual night, and, turning her face to the pillow, she slept. In her dreams, she heard again that loud knocking, and, without understanding why, it wrung her very heart. Then slow and martial music seemed to rise all around, and her brother's voice called out to her; she strove to get near him, but although he called more and more loudly, she saw him not. She seemed to be surrounded by thick and dark clouds, and as they unrolled and gathered around her, she beheld before her a crowd of soldiers, from the midst of whom her brother's voice seemed to proceed. Rose in vain attempted to force herself through the crowd. At last one man came forward to assist her; she tried to disengage herself from the violence of his grasp, for she beheld his face, and it was that of Colonel Kirk. Roughly he dragged her forward—the crowd opened. Rose Aleyn awoke with a start—her arm was indeed roughly grasped, and the voice of her brutal ravisher commanded her to rise. Half dressed he stood by the bedside, and the expression of his face was at once frightful and inexplicable. The room was in a blaze of sunshine, and Rose felt the fresh air of morning blow over her heated face; she struggled to free herself from him, and to hide her head beneath the bed-clothes. Just then, music, the same music which Rose had heard in her dream, sounded beneath the window; she started up, and sprung instantly from the bed. The crowd beneath the window had been all occupied with one dreadful sight—the execution of young Frank Aleyn. Five minutes before, the fatal rope had been twisted round his throat; and his fine manly form was swinging slowly in the struggles of death from the lofty gallows. The music, which had ceased when he was turned off, had commenced again at the command of the inhuman Kirk; but far louder burst one long heart-rending shriek, so loud, so thrilling was it, that it seemed to proceed from no

human creature. Every eye was turned to the casement from whence it came. The face which met the view was like that of a corpse that had died in strong convulsions. Every feature was strained, and fixed in one expression of rigid horror. The mouth and eyes were widely opened, and the hair, long and disordered as it was, almost stood up from the brow. Still every one gazed upon that fair yet fearful countenance; but at once the figure raised its naked arms, and clapped its hands, and shouted with a burst of exulting laughter. There came forward a man to that casement, and a groan of execration rose from the crowd as he appeared. He attempted to drag his victim away, but she wound her arms round the window frame and clung there, hugging it with all her force, and gazing with a look of wild and greedy earnestness on her brother's body. At length the blood gushed from her mouth and nostrils, her arms relaxed their hold, and she fell back lifeless into the arms of Colonel Kirk.

Rose Aleyn did not die, although for many weeks her life was despaired of. She lay a long time in a heavy stupor almost resembling death. At last Winifred heard her speak again. It was about midnight, and she was sitting by the bedside of her friend, and watching her pale and wasted countenance. Rose unclosed her eyes, and a smile played faintly about her lips. She murmured a few indistinct words, and then sunk into a sweet and refreshing sleep. Soon after day-break she awoke again, she looked up at her friend and smiled upon her, and spoke to her, but Winifred's heart died within her as she listened; she had waited, in the joyful stultness of hope, to see her beloved companion awake from that quiet sleep, and she did wake with a tint like that of returning health upon her cheek, with calm words, and gentle smiles, but, alas! they were the words of an idiot. The whirlwind of woe and overwhelming horror had passed entirely away, but it had left a blank, a vacancy, in the intellect of the poor maiden. Thought and memory were gone, and surely their absence was a blessing left by a merciful and gracious God. Winifred soon learned to think so, and to bless her Heavenly Father, for the change which she at first lamented. Rose could not recollect her, but she seemed to love her better than before. They could never converse again on the memories of their youthful days, and Winifred wept to think that those days were better forgotten. In her mind Frank Aleyn was connected with almost every joy of their childhood. He had loved her as a sister; but she had felt for him, unknown to every one, the full and devoted affection of a wife. Her secret was never known, for to most observers she appeared one of those cold and gentle being who are pronounced incapable of strong feeling. The shrine of passion was deep within her heart, but the flame did not burn less ardently because its light was never seen. The trial of Winifred had been severe, and she had often wept over it in secret, but she prayed also in secret; and she learned humbly and heartily to join praises to her prayers; to feel how good it was for her to be in sorrow; to be at first resigned and then happy.

The aged grandmother of Frank Aleyn had died within a few days after his execution; and Mrs. Langland took the helpless and unconscious Rose

to be unto her as a daughter. After her recovery, they left Taunton, and Winifred became the constant companion of her friend. The gentle Rose lived on in a calm of enjoyment; pleased with the sounds and sights of nature, the song of birds, the colors and the fragrance of flowers. Her smiles often made Winifred melancholy, but others loved to see them; and the villagers where she lived would say, when they gazed upon her calm and beautiful countenance, 'who would guess that yon fair maiden has suffered enough to break any human heart?' Her ways were ever gentle; she seldom spoke but to her friend, whose mere presence was a delight to her, and whom she would follow as a loving and docile child.

The only thing that agitated the poor girl was the sound of music, which Rose had once loved; it now terrified her. It might have been that some remembrance of the music heard on one dreadful morning still clung to her mind; but so it was, that if music sounded near her, her smiles vanished, tears started into her eyes, and she fled trembling with horror to her friend Winifred. For some years the gentle Rose lived in the bloom of apparent health, but in her twenty-third year her slight strength began to fail, and she faded away like a flower broken on its stalk. The color departed from her cheek and lips, and a languid heaviness gathered about her soft eyes. She could soon only walk when supported by her beloved Winifred, and at last she was carried out into the flower-garden on mild warm mornings, for she could not bear to remain in her chamber; she loved the light and the sweet summer air.

It was a morning in June; much such a morning as that on which Rose set out on her last hopeless visit to Taunton. Winifred was sitting on a green bank near the house, partly shaded by the branches of a large rose tree. She had often, in the presence of Rose, read aloud in the Book of God, with a hope which she dared not confess to herself, that her words might be at last understood. She was now reading from the Epistles of St. John; and Rose, with her face leaning on her friend's bosom, lay reclining in her arms. She had finished reading, when Rose lifted up her face, and gazed earnestly on the sky. Winifred saw that a sudden change had come over her countenance; she saw Rose raise her clasped hands, and a few faint words were breathed from her lips. A thrill of rapture darted through the heart of Winifred, for those words were the clear language of thoughtful and connected prayer; the light of intelligence shone for an instant in her eyes, and then the fair lids closed over them. Still the lips moved, but her words were now like sighs, and Winifred listened to them in vain. She pressed her lips to those of the dying maiden, and a smile broke like sunlight over the pallid features; gradually its lustre died away;—for the spirit of life was gone.

T H E B R O K E N M I N I A T U R E .

FOUNDED ON FACTS.

Two young officers belonging to the same regiment aspired to the hand of the same young lady. We will conceal their real names under those of Albert and Horace. Two youths more noble never saw the untarnished colors of their country wave over their heads, or took more undaunted hearts into the field, or purer forms or a more polished address in the drawing room.

Yet there was a marked difference in their characters, and each wore his virtues so becomingly, and one of them, at least, concealed his vices so becomingly also, that the maiden who saw them both, was puzzled where to give the preference, and stood, as it were, between two flowers, of very opposite colors and perfumes, and yet each of equal beauty.

Horace who was the superior officer, was more commanding in his figure than, but not so beautiful as Albert. Horace was the more vivacious, but Albert spake with more eloquence upon all subjects. If Horace did not claim the praise of being sentimental, nor Albert the fame of being jovial, Horace laughed the most with less wit, and Albert was the most witty with less laughter. Horace was the most nobly born, yet Albert had the better fortune, the mind that could acquire, and the circumspection that could preserve one.

Whom of the two did Matilda prefer? Yes she had a secret, an undefined preference; yet did her inclinations walk sisterly hand in hand with her duties, that her spotless mind could not divide them from each other. She talked the more of Horace, yet thought she more of Albert. As yet, neither of the aspirants had declared themselves. Sir Oliver, Matilda's father, soon put the matter at rest. He had his private and family reasons for wishing Horace to be the favored lover; but as he by no means wished to lose to himself and his daughter the valued friendship of a man of probity and honor, he took the delicate method of letting Albert understand that every thing he possessed, his grounds his house and all, belonged to him. He excepted only his daughter.

When the two soldiers called, and they were in the habit of making their visits together, Sir Oliver had always some improvement to show Albert, some dog for him to admire, or some horse for him to try; and even in wet weather, there was never wanting a manuscript to decipher, so that he was sure to take him out of the room or out of the house, and leave Horace alone with his daughter, uttering some disparaging remark, in a joocular tone, to the effect that Horace was fit only to dance attendance upon the ladies.

Albert understood all this, and submitted. He did not strive to violate the rights of hospitality, to seduce the affections of the daughter, and outrage the feelings of the father. He was not one of those who would enter the temple of beauty, and under pretence of worshipping the shrine, destroy it. A

common-place lover might have done this, but Albert had no common-place mind. But did he not suffer? O! that he suffered, and suffered acutely, his altered looks, his heroic silence, and at times his forced gaiety, too plainly testified.

He kept his flame in the inmost recess of his heart like a lamp in a sepulchre, and which lighted up the ruins of his happiness alone.

To his daughter, Sir Oliver spoke more explicitly. Her affections had not been engaged; and the slight preference that she began to feel stealing into her heart for Albert, had its nature changed at once. When she found that he could not approach her as a lover, she found to spring up for him in her bosom, a regard as sisterly and ardent as if the same cradle had rocked them both. She felt, and her father knew, that Albert was a character that must be loved, if not as a husband, as a brother.

The only point upon which Matilda differed with her father, was to the degree of encouragement that ought to be given to Horace.

"Let us, my dear father," she would entreatingly say, "be free at least for one year. Let us for that period stand committed by no engagement; we are both young, myself extremely so. A peasant maiden would lay a longer probation upon her swain. Do but ask Albert if am not in the right?"

The appeal that she made to Albert, which ought to have assured her father of the purity of her sentiments, frightened him into a suspicion of lurking affection having crept into her bosom.

Affairs were at this crisis when Napoleon returned from Elba, and burst like the demon of war from a thunder cloud, upon the plains of France; and all the warlike and the valorous arose and walled her in with their veteran breast. The returned hero lifted up his red right hand, and the united force of France rushed with him to battle.

The regiment of our rivals was ordered to Belgium. After many entreaties from her father, Matilda at length consented to sit for a miniature to an eminent artist; but upon the express stipulation, when it should be given to Horace, that they were still to hold themselves free. The miniature was finished, the resemblance excellent, and the exultation and rapture of Horace complete. He looked upon the possession of it, notwithstanding Matilda's stipulation, as an earnest of his happiness. He had the picture set most ostentatiously, in the finest jewels, and constantly wore it on his person; and his enemies say that he showed it with more freedom than the delicacy of his situation, with regard to Matilda, should have warranted.

Albert made no complaint. He acknowledged the merits of his rival eagerly, the more eagerly as the rivalry was suspected. The scene must now change. The action at Quitra Aras has taken place. The principal body of the British troops are at Brussels, and the news of the rapid advance

of the French is brought to Wellington; and the forces are, before break of day, moving forward. But where is Horace? The column of troops to which he belongs is on the line of march, but Albert and not Horace is at the head. The enemy are in sight. Glory's sunbright face gleams in the front, whilst dishonor and infamy scowl in the rear. The orders to charge are given, and at the very moment that the battle is about to join, the foaming, jaded, breathless courser of Horace, strains forward as if with a last effort, and seems to have but just strength enough to wheel with his rider into his station. A faint huzza from the troops welcomed their leader. On, ye brave, on!

The edges of the battle join. The scream—the shout—the groan, and the volleying thunder of artillery, mingle in one deafening roar. The smoke clears away—the charge is over—the whirlwind has passed. Horace and Albert are both down, and the blood flows away from their wounds, and is drank up by the thirsty soil.

But a few days after the eventful battle of Waterloo, Matilda and Sir Oliver were in the drawing room. Sir Oliver had read to his daughter, who was sitting in breathless agitation, the details of the battle, and was now reading down slowly and silently the list of the dead and maimed.

"Can you my dear girl," said he tremulously, "bear to hear very bad news?"

She could reply in no other way than by laying down her head on her father's shoulder, and sobbing out the almost inaudible word—read."

Horace is mentioned as having been early in the action, badly wounded, and is returned missing.

"Horrible!" exclaimed the shuddering girl, and embraced her father the more closely.

"And our poor friend, Albert is dangerously wounded too," said the father.

Matilda made no reply, but as a mass of snow slips down from its supporting bank—as silently, as pure, and almost as cold, fell Matilda from her father's arms, insensible upon the floor. Sir Oliver was not surprized, but much puzzled. He thought that she had not felt quite enough for her lover, but too much for her friend. A few days after, a Belgium officer was introduced by a mutual friend, and was pressed to dine by Sir Oliver. As he had been present at the battle, Matilda would not permit her grief to prevent her meeting him at the table. Immediately she entered the room—the officer started and took every opportunity of gazing on her intently, when he thought himself unobserved. At last he did so, so incautiously, and in a manner particular, that when the servants had withdrawn, Sir Oliver asked him if he had ever seen his daughter before.

"Assuredly not, but most assuredly her resemblance," said he and he immediately produced the miniature which Horace had obtained from his mistress.

The first impression of both father and daughter was that Horace was no more, and that the token had been entrusted to the hands of the officer, by the hands of the dying lover; but he quickly undeceived them, by informing them that he was lying desperately, but not dangerously wounded, at a farm house on the continent, and that in fact he had suffered amputation.

"Then, in the name of all that is honorable, how came you by that miniature?" exclaimed Sir Oliver.

O, he had lost it to a notorious sharper, at a gambling house at Brussels, on the eve of the battle, which sharper offered it to me, as he said he supposed the gentleman from whom he won it, would never come to repay the large sum of money for which it was left in pledge. Though I had no personal knowledge of Colonel Horace, yet as I admired the painting, and saw that the jewels were worth more than the rascal asked for them, I purchased it really with the hope of returning it to its first proprietor, if he should feel any value for it, either as a family picture, or as some pledge of affection; but I have not yet had an opportunity of meeting with him.

"What an insult!" thought Sir Oliver.

"What an escape!" exclaimed Matilda, after the officer had finished his relation.

I need not say that Sir Oliver immediately repurchased the picture, and that he had no further thoughts of marrying his daughter to a gamester.

"Talking of miniatures," resumed the officer, a very extraordinary occurrence has just taken place. A miniature has actually saved the life of a gallant young officer of the same regiment as Horace, a fine fellow as ever bestrode a charger."

"His name?" exclaimed Matilda and Sir Oliver together.

"Is Albert, and he is the second in command; a high spirited fellow that same Albert."

"Pray, sir, do me the favor to relate the particulars," said Sir Oliver; and Matilda looked gratefully at her father for the request.

"O, I do not know them minutely," said he, "but I believe it was simply that the picture served his bosom as a sort of breastplate, and broke the force of a musket ball, but did not, however, prevent him from receiving a very smart wound. The thing was much talked of for a day or two, and some joking took place on the subject; but when it was seen that these raileries gave him more pain than the wound, the subject was dropped, and soon seemed to have been forgotten."

Shortly after, the officer took his leave.

The reflections of Matilda were bitter. Her miniature had been infamously lost, whilst the mistress of Albert, of that Albert whom she felt might, but for family pride, have been her lover, was even in effigy, the guardian angel of a life she loved too well.

Months elapsed, and Horace did not appear. Sir Oliver wrote him an indignant letter, and bade him consider all intercourse broken off for the future. He returned a melancholy answer, in which he pleaded guilty to the charge—spoke of the madness of intoxication, confessed that he was hopeless, and that he deserved to be so; in a word, he was so humble, so desponding, so dispirited, that even the insulted Matilda was softened, and shed tears over his blighted hopes. And here we must do Horace the justice to say, that the miniature was merely left in the hand of the winner, he being a stranger, as a deposit until the next morning, but which the next morning did not allow him to redeem, though rent from him a limb, and left him as one dead upon the field. Had he not gamed,

his miniature would not have been lost to a sharper, the summons to march would have found him at his quarters, his harrassed steed would not have failed him in the charge, and, in all probability, his limb, would have been saved, and his love have been preserved.

A year had now elapsed, and at length Albert was announced. He had heard that all intimacy was broken off between Horace and Matilda, but nothing more.

The story of the lost miniature was confined to the few whom it concerned, and those few wished all memory of it to be buried in oblivion. Something like a hope had returned to Albert's bosom. He was graciously received by the father, and diffidently by Matilda. She remembered the "broken miniature," and supposed him to have been long and ardently attached to another.

It was on a summer evening, there was no other company, the sun was setting in glorious splendor. After dinner, Matilda had retired only to the window, to enjoy, she said, that prospect the drawing-room could not afford. She spoke truly, for Albert was not there. Her eyes were upon the declining sun, but her soul was still in the dining room.

At length Sir Oliver and Albert arose from the table, and came and seated themselves near Matilda.

"Come Albert, the story of the miniature," said Sir Oliver.

"What! fully, truly, and unreservedly?" said Albert, looking anxiously at Matilda.

"Of course."

"Offence or no offence," said Albert with a look of arch meaning.

"Whom could the tale possibly offend?" said Sir Oliver.

"That I am yet to learn. Listen."

As far as regarded Matilda, the last word was wholly superfluous. She seemed to have lost every faculty but hearing. Albert in a low yet hurried tone, commenced thus:—

"I loved, but was not loved. I had a rival that was seductive. I say that he was preferred by the father, and not indifferent to the daughter. My love I could not—I would not attempt to conquer; but my actions, honor bade me to control, and I obeyed. The friend was admitted where the lover would have been banished. My successful rival obtained the miniature of his mistress. O, then, then I envied him, and impelled by unconquerable passion, I obtained clandestinely from the artist, a fac-simile of that which I so much envied him. It was my heart's silent companion, and, when at last duty called me away from the original, not often did I venture to gaze on the resemblance. To prevent my secret being discovered by accident, I had the precious token enclosed in a double locket of gold, which opened by a secret spring, known only to myself and the maker.

"I gazed on the lovely features on the dawn of the battle day. I returned it to its resting place, and my heart throbbed proudly under its pressure. I was conscious that there I had a talisman, and, if ever I felt as heroes felt, it was then—it was then.

"On, on I dashed through the roaring stream of slaughter. Sabres flashed over and around me—

what cared I? I had this on my heart, and a brave man's sword in my hand—and come the worst, better I could not have died than on that noble field. The showers of fatal balls hissed around me. What cared I! I looked around—to my fellow soldiers I trusted for victory, and my soul I entrusted to God, and—shall I own it?—for a few tears to my memory, I trusted to the original of this my besom companion,"

"She must have had a heart of ice, had she refused then, said Matilda in a voice almost inaudible from emotion.

Albert bowed gracefully, and thus continued. "While I was thus borne forward into the very centre of the struggle, a ball struck at my heart—but the guardian angel was there, and it was protected; the miniature, the double case, even my flesh was penetrated, and the blood soiled the image of that beauty, for whose protection it would have joyed to flow.

The shattered case, the broken, the blood-stained miniature, are now dearer to me than ever, and so will remain until life shall desert me."

"May I look upon those happy features that have inspired and preserved a heart so noble?" said Matilda, in a low and distinct voice, that seemed unnatural to her from excess of emotion.

Albert dropped upon his knee before her, touched the spring, and placed the miniature in the trembling hand of Matilda. In an instant she recognized her own resemblance. She was above the affection of false modesty—her eyes filled with grateful tears—she kissed the encrimsoned painting, and sobbed aloud—"Albert, this shall never leave my bosom. O my well—my long beloved!"

In a moment she was in the arms of the happy soldier, whilst one hung over them with unspeakableapture, bestowing that best boon upon a daughter's love—"A father's blessing!"

THE CLOSE OF A FINE DAY.

Translated from the French.

THE morning dawned with such splendor that it seemed to announce a fete in Heaven. Josephine, the beautiful Josephine, the empress of France (who was then residing at Petit-Trianon,) was awaked by the bright rays of the sun beaming upon her face through the folds of the embroidered curtains. Half rising from her bed, she drew them aside, and gazed long and ardently upon the morning sun; it was one of those looks which she bestowed only on her son, her adored Eugene, or the emperor, her husband. She summoned none of her attendants; but wrapping herself in a white gown, she left her couch, and opened one of the windows of her bed-chamber. All nature seemed languid. The tops of the trees gently bowing to the morning gale, appeared to the fancy, as they touched each other, to breathe kindness and love. The unfortunate Josephine involuntarily sighed forth, "Oh! what a glorious day!—surely some happiness is this day in store for me!" These words had hardly escaped her lips, when she heard music under the window of the chateau. The empress thought that she had been observed. She slowly retired from the casement, and again reclined upon her bed.

Suddenly, without any announcement, without even tapping at the door of the chamber, some one entered, and hurried towards the couch of Josephine. "Ah!" exclaimed she, folding her gown around her, and stretching forth her arms, "I was certain this would be a happy day for me. My son! my Eugene!" She wept with delight; and the first transports of meeting over, they gazed at each other in silence which was only interrupted by an embrace. Their was something almost divine in the affection of Eugene towards his mother. "My good, my kind mother!" said the viceroy of Italy, when he recovered the power of utterance, "I wished to surprise you, to visit you without announcing my arrival by your attendants. I only took care to awaken you by the music of the military band." "You have done wrong perhaps, dear Eugene, in not previously sending to prepare me for the meeting," replied Josephine, with a heavenly smile, not in the least tinged with reproach; "for sudden joy, joy like mine, might occasion death. I have always loved you.—The half of the love I bear the emperor is occasioned by the kindness with which he regards you. The other half, and be not jealous of it, belongs to him alone; I love him because he is Napoleon." "And I, I love you with all my heart, because you are my mother, and because you adore him," continued Eugene. "You have doubtless seen him since you have returned, my son?" asked Josephine. "My first visit, as well as my first thought, was for you, my mother." "You owe it to another, my son," immediately replied the empress, gravely yet affectionately; "I can only claim the second. But the emperor, who loves his mother so dearly, well knows what it is to be a son," continued she; "and

he will forgive your neglect, my dear Eugene." But perceiving that her reproach had hurt him, she dried up his tears with a maternal embrace.

The mother and son breakfasted together in private, that their intercourse might not be trammelled by the rules of etiquette. They talked of Italy, of the campaigns, and victories of the emperor; till Josephine felt inclined to believe that it was a god she had for a husband and an angel for a son.

When their meal was ended, they descended into the garden, and the prince supporting his mother on his arm, they wandered through the winding walks, traversed the subterranean grottoes, or rowed gently on the bosom of the lake.

On the same morning a magnificent carriage dashed up the avenue to Versailles, and paused at the grand entrance. Another, drawn by eight horses, and still more magnificent, followed this with the rapidity of lightning. This last was hailed, as it passed, with shouts of joy; but the man to whom this welcome was addressed paid little attention to it. His arms were folded, and his head inclined upon his breast in an attitude of profound reflection; he did not respond, even by the slightest gestures, to the acclamations of the crowd.

Napoleon, for it was he, seemed moody and morose, as if he was on the eve of engaging in a battle which was to decide the fate of Europe. In vain did the multitude look for one of those gracious smiles, which he so well knew how to bestow. He saw it not; he heard it not. He could only listen to the thoughts that weighed on his mind; and the restless demeanor which he found it impossible to command, plainly showed that his reflections were of the most harassing description. He was accompanied in the carriage by the chamberlain of the palace, who, observing the agitation of his master, took care not to increase his ill-temper by any attempts at conversation.

The emperor alighted, and said to Duroc, "I shall go to Trianon on foot, and attended by none but Roustan. Observe, I shall soon return.—I only wish to surprise the empress" added he. His brow appeared to darken more and more. Accompanied by Roustan, he hastened through one of cross-paths in the park. During the walk but few words escaped his lips. He still remained deeply buried in thought.

Although Napoleon had not intended to give the empress any previous notice of his visit to Versailles, yet the report of his arrival reached Trianon before him. M. Frere, Josephine's valet-de-chambre, hurried to acquaint his mistress with the news, who was still wandering in the shady walks of the garden with her dearly loved son. The information cast a sudden gloom over her spirits, which was the more unaccountable, as she had usually been transported with joy on the arrival of her husband. Eugene likewise, who endeavored to preserve the gayness and joy he had hitherto displayed, found it impossible to conceal his uneasiness, though he

could not account for it. As the empress was passing the threshold of the chateau, she slipped and almost fell. "So fine a day!" said she, sighing; "should it end in sorrow!" . . . Josephine, however, still thought of her son Eugene, though she felt so uneasy for herself; and fearing lest the emperor would testify surprise and displeasure at not receiving the first visit, she prevailed upon him to retire to a room, adjoining that in which she intended to receive her husband. Eugene had hardly retired, when the emperor entered hurriedly, and tossed his hat upon the sofa, without uttering a word. When the empress arose to receive the accustomed kiss, she shuddered, and shrank back as if under the influence of some supernatural power. His feverish lips but slightly touched her forehead, and that seemingly with constraint. The emperor, with his hands convulsively clasped, walked rapidly up and down the apartment in silence, while Josephine stood terrified, leaning against the wall, and anxiously watching every motion of her husband. Suddenly the emperor paused, and stood before his wife for some time, with his eyes anxiously fixed upon her. "Napoleon, tell me, what has your poor Josephine done, that you should frighten her so?" "Let us not talk of that now," said he in a tone of constrained harshness; "business, madame, business demands our attention to-day." "Madame! You used to call me Josephine!" "Well, well, don't talk of that." "But what then?" asked Josephine, frightened at his manner. "Business, I tell you, business!" exclaimed Napoleon, hastily. "There was a time," replied Josephine, "when you spoke to me of your affairs, that you might gather some friendly counsels from a feeble woman; your voice was not then so harsh, and your smiles, which were not then so bitter as they are now, encouraged me to speak my thoughts." "In truth, madame, I would sooner be compelled to re-conquer the whole of Italy, than to utter my present thoughts. The emperor of the French, who must attend to the welfare of his people, has no time to make a parade of sentiment."

Josephine drew forth a casket, in which were preserved the letters of Napoleon, and opening it, placed it before him. "Sire," said she, with dignity, "these were written by the first consul, the victor of Marengo." "Ah! love letters!" replied the emperor glancing at them carelessly; "love-letters! true!—but does it become you, madame, to display them thus? . . . This, for instance, would you that I should read it to you—this, which I wrote to you on the field of battle, worn-out with fatigue, thinking only of you, telling all my glory to you alone, who would not return a single answer, indulging, as you did, in all the pleasures of Milan, and perhaps encouraging the attentions of some cavalier?" "Sire!" exclaimed the empress, "have some respect for me, for yourself!" "Or shall I read this?" continued Napoleon, becoming more heated, as he remembered the jealousy to which he had formerly been a victim; "would you wish me to do so? Hold I will." And he read the following;—"I came to Milan; I hastened to your apartment; I quitted every thing to see you, to embrace you. You were not there.—You were at a fete, you were away when I arrived, you thought not of Napoleon. Caprice made you love him, and inconstancy

renders you now indifferent to him. The pain I feel is as severe as it was unexpected. Continue in your career of pleasure; happiness was made for you; the whole world is too happy if it can but please you, and your husband is very, very miserable."

"Oh, the thought of this draws the blood to my cheek," continued the emperor; "remove these scrawls; away with them, or I will tear them to pieces. Do not remind me again, that I, the foremost man in all the world, could have a rival in the affections of a woman whom I have raised to the dignity of my wife. At this moment, the sounds of footsteps was heard in an adjoining apartment, accompanied with a long-drawn and ill-suppressed sigh. "Who overhears us?" asked the emperor, angrily; "Who is there?"—and he advanced to the door of the chamber whence the noise proceeded. "It is my son who is there," replied Josephine, in a tone which manifested her indignation at his reproaches. She herself opened the door for prince Eugene, who threw himself into the arms of the empress, weeping, and only able to say, "My mother! my poor mother!"

The emperor, who had greatly exaggerated the suspicions which the apparent levity of Josephine had formerly occasioned, was so surprised at the sudden appearance of Eugene, and at the picture of grief displayed before him, that he did not even think of questioning the viceroy as to his arrival. Josephine, the insulted Josephine, now appeared to have dominion over the emperor, but by other means than before. "My son has heard my accusation," said she, addressing Napoleon, "let him, sire, also hear my defence. It shall be brief. I have been young, and too desirous, perhaps, to receive homage, that it might seem, as it were, the reflection of your glory. But the wife of Napoleon Bonaparte has not, in her wedded state, had thought or wish, which she would not avow to her husband as freely as to her God. Heaven grant that Napoleon may have as little reason to reproach himself as the Empress Josephine."

The voice of the empress, usually so calm, was now decisive and energetic. As she pronounced the last words, the emperor stood almost in the light of one accused; for besides that Josephine had never ceased to be his dearest friend, and the only person who possessed constant influence over him, it was no longer doubtful, that her conjugal fidelity was unimpeachable; and her justification to him, delivered in the presence of a third person like Eugene, hurts his pride.

He now made use of a gentler tone, judging that he would by this means obtain more easily the object of his visit. "You are, right my Josephine," said he, "and I was in the wrong to give credence to suspicions totally unworthy of you: you are right, and may you always be my best friend. But let Eugene leave us alone for a few moments, that I may propose to you a sacrifice which will cost me as many tears as it will you, Josephine." "You can proceed before me, sire," said Eugene, who truly conjectured the impending blow; "the empress will perhaps require her son to aid her to support her misfortunes." Josephine remained silent. She had never listened to the reports that had been spread abroad since the accession of her husband

to the throne. Eugene gazed at her with tears in his eyes. "Well, then! my friend," replied Bonaparte, let your son, who will always be mine also, hear me, and comfort even me; for it is a frightful sacrifice." So saying, with an air of kindness, he placed one hand on the shoulder of Eugene, with the other he clasped the hand of Josephine. "My friend," proceeded he, after a moment's recollection "do you think that an attachment of the heart is able to withstand every trial, and that, through the force of circumstances, two beings that adore each other, can live separated by distance, though not by sentiment?" Josephine at first did not understand him. It was evident that Napoleon was really attached to her, for he spoke much and indefinitely, before he ventured to pronounce the word *divorce*, which he at length summoned up courage to do, with pale and trembling lips. He joined to it some expressions concerning the interests and the glory of France.

Napoleon doubtless expected a scene of tears, shrieks, and fainting. His surprise was great, when at this avowal, the empress summoned up all her strength, and answered him apparently unmoved. "Sire! if I had faith in oracles, and if I believed that, as has been told me, I should carry to my place of exile your fortune and your happiness, I would not consent to what you have proposed. But, if it will advantage either yourself or France, I will consent to it." She spoke in a firm and sustained tone; as she concluded, she reclined her head on the breast of her son, murmuring so low that it could not be heard by the emperor, "I will consent, but it will kill me." "Why do you speak of exile?" replied Napoleon, affected even to tears. "My Josephine shall always be so near me, that I can see her sometimes; and often will I leave the palace of another wife, whom the interests of the state not my heart, have compelled me to take, to clasp you again in my arms." "I give, without regret, all else to my successor," answered Josephine, "since I possess your heart; for mine is still young enough for friendship, though my face be too old for love."

When Napoleon was ready to depart, Josephine approached the window, and perceiving that the weather had suddenly changed, and that the rain was descending in torrents, she sighed deeply, and then ordered one of her carriages to be prepared to conduct the emperor to his suite.

This incident took place at the end of the month of September, 1809. Three years after, when the empress Maria-Louisa, indulging in the amusements of Vienna, thought but little of the exile of her husband to Elba, the unfortunate Josephine died of grief. The last words that she uttered were, "Elba!—Napoleon!"

During the hundred days, the emperor questioned her medical attendants concerning the cause of her death. "Grief for your misfortunes," was the reply; and Napoleon added, with a sigh, "She at least loved me."

THE COUNTRY COUSIN.

BY MRS JANE E. LOCKE.

Is good without a name ; vileness is so ;
The property by what it is should go,
Not by the title.'—*Shakspeare.*

'DEAR me, I wish Susan Heyward had staid at home, Ellen,' said Mary Lacy, 'for I am sure she will be nothing but a mortification to us the whole time she stays in the city. And then our party tomorrow evening — bless me, must we invite her to our party ?'

'I have just been thinking,' said Ellen, 'that there may be a way to get rid of it. We can omit to invite her, and then call on her and say that our company was very select, altogether unlike that to which she has been accustomed, and that she would not have enjoyed herself had she been here—or, there are a thousand other apologies which we can conjure up between this time and that, so let's trouble ourselves no more about it ; for you know she has a good heart and will overlook it all in us, if we treat her politely during the remainder of her stay in the city.'

'Any how,' replied Emeline, 'I would not invite her, and let the apologies take care of themselves. Suppose she takes it in dudgeon, (by the way, she is just one of that kind of persons who will not) so much the better for us, for 'tis the trouble and mortification of introducing her into our society that we wish to get rid of, and what can more effectually prevent it than this.'

'Oh, well,' said Mary, 'if she should take offence — and you know we must not offend her on our father's account, the only daughter of his only sister, and he has always possessed such an affection for her, that we should incur his lasting displeasure should we neglect her.'

'Then there is no other way, is there,' again replied Emeline, but to invite her, and let her come, for come she will if invited, undoubtedly, in her full country garb, with all her whims and oddities abundantly displayed? Mercy on us, I wish such people had common sense and could see when and where they were not wanted. And then, too, what will Monroe think of us? I would not have him know we have

such a cousin for the world, and if her presence here has not the excuse of relationship, 'twill be worse still.'

The above dialogue was held in the back parlor of the Lacy's the evening previous to the contemplated party. Mr Lacy, or, in respect to his office, Judge Lacy, held an undisputed claim to the first rank in the city of ———. A wife and three daughters, the youngest eighteen years of age, constituted the whole family. The eldest daughter, Mary, might have been in reality a beauty, and they all had been in turn admired and flattered and caressed. They all had that stiff preciseness of manners which is *called* genteel, lady-like ; could all sing and dance, and thrum the piano ; all had a smattering of French, Italian, and Spanish ; all had a natural taste for dress, and gratified it, through every changing mode. In short, did mere fashionable accomplishments constitute the lady, they had each and all an undisputed claim to the title. But there are those who will join with me in saying this is not the fact, whose every day observation and experience proves it is not ; they had yet to learn that virtue and real greatness of mind, in a garb however humble, can stand unawed in presence of the mighty of the earth, and command an admiration more enduring than they who bow down to the pomp and splendor of the world, and worship the flipperies and fooleries of fashion. I would there were not their like, but unfortunately may be classed with them too many of those who pass for well-bred and accomplished both in town and city ; who eat, and drink, and live by fashion ; who, when a new style is announced as fashionable, however ridiculous or unbecoming, never inquire farther, but immediately bend all their efforts to appear in the full cut, as though their whole reputation were *suspended upon a thread* ; and who, continually dwelling on their own fair outside, seem not to recollect while associating with others, that the heart has anything to do in forming the character, and judge of the high and low only as the exterior is either splendid or mean.

* * * * *

Susan Heyward, their cousin german, was the only child of a widowed sister of Judge Lacy, who resided in the interior of the country about fifty miles, and who now, for the first time since her childhood, had walked the streets of that great metropolis. She was in the truest sense, well bred, dignified, and accomplished, possessed of that true politeness of the heart, which seeks to oblige and make those happy around. The

few past years of her life had been spent at school, and to the neglect of all the lighter accomplishments she had studied books, and left her instructors, a well educated lady, despite her country breeding. The Lacys, one and all, availing themselves of the relationship and the good old fashioned hospitality of the mother, made annually an excursion to the place of her residence, and thus and there passed many a summer month, which was received among their city acquaintances as a trip to the watering places, or the still more fashionable resort, the falls of Niagara. Susan was always invited to return their visits, and always with the secret fear that she would accept ; though there was no reason on earth why they should be ashamed of her, except that she did not choose, and could not afford to dress like them, and was not, according to their ideas of gentility, genteel. At present she was visiting a relative of her deceased father, the next door to Judge Lacy's. They had been duly informed of her arrival, consequently they could not apologize for any neglect, by appearing to be ignorant of her being *in the place*.

Of Mrs Lacy I have forbore to speak, because enough has already been told of the daughters, (believing as I do, that the errors of young ladies can often be accounted for in the faults of the mother) to prove she was no model for any of my readers to copy. In the above conversation she took no part, and after a long reasoning of the daughters among themselves, they concluded to admit their awkward country cousin, as they called her, to their party and abide the consequences, however mortifying, with as much fortitude as possible.

* * * * *

The long anticipated and much dreaded evening to the Lacy's, had at length arrived, and a splendid party was already closing in. The door bell rang once more, and presently a stranger lady entered the decorated apartment. There was a slight diffidence in her air that might have been construed to awkwardness. Courtesying in rather a hasty manner as she entered, and glancing her eye over the company, her cheek reddened, and she hurriedly dropped into the first vacant seat. Soon, however, her confusion and embarrassment passed away, and she smiled and spoke as gracefully as though she had been a city belle. Not so the confusion and perplexity her presence had occasioned the Misses Lacy ; for it was no more or less a personage than Susan Heyward. Despite their secret hopes and better calculations, she had come and made just

such an entrance as they would not for the world she had made. Mary's naturally pale face was crimsoned with mortification, and in the flutter and confusion of her feelings, she changed her seat, leaving a very important interrogation unanswered, that the gentleman who sate next her had that moment made, uttered nonsense to divert the attention of another from the door, laughed when there was no occasion, and, in fine, made herself appear more awkward and ridiculous than the person who had been the cause of her confusion; and through the whole evening she assumed an unnatural and embarrassed air. Ellen's cheek also reddened with shame, and she felt troubled at her cousin's presence, the more, as her reputed lover, Monroe, (alias, Capt. Monroe of his Majesty's 76th, then quartering on the British frontier, and youngest son of Lord M. of London,) then deeply engaged in conversation with her, made a '*full stop*,' when, according to the strict rules of punctuation, nothing more than a comma was required, and threw his large searching eyes upon the form that entered, scanning every feature of the face, and noticing the whole exterior, till he seemed riveted in admiration, and thus finished their discourse. Emeline's lip curled in scorn, and with a contemptuous toss of the head, muttered in a low feathery voice between her teeth, '*ridiculous!*' — and then turning to a lady who sate near, loaded with French filagree, cameo, and coral, in an under tone — '*the daughter of a distant relative of my father — out of respect to the acquaintance could not avoid inviting her — had no idea she would come — but the ignorant, you know, are always impudent, and make their way by fastening on the skirts of the better sort, who from some secret policy are obliged to notice them.*'

'Yes,' replied the lady, 'any one might know by her dress that she could not be much, and that some apology of that kind could explain her being here this evening.'

Now the dress of Susan Heyward had nothing in it either odd or mean, in the strictest sense. On the contrary, it was in perfect simplicity, which, in her station, was perfect taste, and would have passed among gentlemen, that class which ladies so much seek to please, for real elegance. It had no unbecoming variety of colors, no glaring contrast of black, and white and red, no redundancy of ornament, nothing unsuitable or unreasonable, but possessed a delicate and unstudied uniformity of colors, with neatness and carelessness combined. Her pale blue silk, instead of being clipped to the fashionable

length, the better to display a beautifully turned foot and ankle, or, to gratify some still more foolish whim, answered well to those of

‘Troy’s proud dames *whose garments sweep the ground.*’

Her hair was arranged in true classical style, with here and there a tress carelessly straying from the fillet that bound it. Her form, by nature elegant, was free from all the bracing of art, hence her motions were unpinioned, easy and graceful. True, she was dressed unlike in many respects, the fashionables of the day, for this terribly mortifying scene to the Lacy’s occurred at a recent period, but it certainly had for its sanction, richness of material and a true and refined taste, and therefore could not be called mean or ridiculous, though the tinsel and the show of fashion were wanting. And then there was a something in her manners that betrayed a gentility of heart, and showed her spirit held no communion with the things that pass with the usage.

The pause that for a moment succeeded her entrance was again closed by conversation, laughter, and merriment, but our poor unassuming heroine was obliged to sit in silence for most of the evening, because her more fashionable cousins could not brook the mortification of introducing her, except to a few of their more undistinguished guests. At length, however, Monroe took occasion to inquire of Mary Lacy, what young lady that was who sate so mute and yet so dignified?

‘The daughter of an acquaintance of my father,’ was the scarce articulated reply.

‘Suppose then, you just take the trouble of introducing me,’ said he.

‘Since I am invited I must do it,’ thought Mary, ‘but what motive on earth can he have in wishing it,’ and then audibly, ‘certainly, sir’ — and she led him across the room, ‘Miss Heyward, Capt. Monroe,’ bows and kind looks were exchanged, and Monroe took his seat beside the awkward country girl, as she had more than once that evening been styled. Mary turned to walk away. Cousin ‘Mary,’ said Susan, ‘take this seat,’ at the same time moving a vacant chair near her.

An indignant smile might have been seen curling the lip of Monroe, as he chose to remark, ‘your cousin, then, Mary.’

With an embarrassed and mortified air she replied, ‘yes, — yes, my cousin,’ and took the proffered seat. A few common place observations, and they seemed acquainted. They con-

vassed subjects and talked of 'men and things,' compared tastes and gave judgment. Monroe became eloquent, and Susan always eloquent and interesting in conversation, for she had a soft voice and sweet smile, never appeared so well in her life; it was, indeed, her happiest effort, and Monroe, to the utter neglect of all politeness and etiquette, and the great distress and mortification of Ellen, kept his seat beside the country cousin, till the party broke up.

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'Who would have thought,' said Emeline Lacy, after the company had retired, 'that Susan Heywood would have joined our party this evening, after all the hints we gave her yesterday?'

'Who would have thought,' replied Mary, that Monroe would have waited on her home?'

'La, me,' said Ellen, 'how could he avoid it. She held him in durance almost the whole evening; and when they rose to go, she stuck fast to his elbow, as though she were pinned to the skirts of his coat; and pray what else could he do in politeness or civility but offer to accompany her.'

'Surely, he could not be pleased with her,' again answered Mary. 'Her bluestocking manners, and then her dress was so queer, so countryfied, all blue from head to foot except her stockings, and not a rose or jewel in her hair, of any description. And did you notice her sleeves? oh, bless me, I know they were not half the size of mine, and no stiffening, I dare say, nothing but a little starched cambric to give them effect; and no *stays*, I'll venture to say; and then her shoes, dear me, did you mind them; they were absolutely the old fashioned round toed shoes!'

'Don't describe her,' said Ellen, chagrined at the recollection; 'for I presume Monroe will make himself merry to-morrow, at her expense.'

'I don't care if he does,' said Emeline, 'you might have listened to me, and not invited her.'

So saying, they severally sought their chambers, overcome with envy, jealousy, wounded pride, mortified vanity, and disappointed love, though they did not dare to acknowledge it to each other.

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Monroe, after bidding his fair charge good night, retired to his lodgings, and had any one listened to his soliloquy, as he

sought his pillow, they had learned that his attention to Susan Heyward that evening, was very far from having been compelled. 'What could have been the reason, said he to himself, that Mary Lacy was unwilling to acknowledge her cousin, Miss Heyward? I noticed that the young ladies, through the whole evening, were particular to call her *Miss Heyward*. Certainly they could not have been ashamed of her, for she appears far better than either of the three. So unassuming in her manners, and apparently so regardless of trifles. And then what a pretty form she has; so elastic and so free from that stiffness and fixedness common among young ladies! I wonder if she had on stays; I never saw a lady without, so I cannot judge, but certainly she looked admirably. She did not seem to be made up like a doll of whalebone, wadding, and cords. And her dress, how beautiful it was — so delicate and free from all vulgarity of taste. True, her shoes were rather of the older style, but then they are certainly the handsomest; and showed she was no slave to fashion. I wish all ladies would take her for a pattern, especially in the length of their dresses and their adaptation of colors. They certainly would please us better; though we are obliged in compliment to them to admire everything they choose to wear. Neither is it so very strange, that those ladies who have not brothers who may speak freely and without compliment, fall often into the ridiculous. But Miss H. seems to have avoided it. But where is the use in denying it to myself; I have seldom seen a lady I thought possessed of so much good sense, and so much amiability of heart. Ellen Lacy, in the comparison, shrinks to a mere cypher. I wonder I could have ever thought her pretty, so fond of outside show. Ladies who think so much of dress, and attach so much importance to things of no consequence, are generally weak and trifling themselves. This shall henceforth be the criterion by which I judge.'

With this he fell asleep. But from that night the Lacys daily saw less and less of him; and in a few months his marriage with Susan Heyward was publicly announced, and he with his devoted wife, the awkward, neglected, country cousin of the proud and fashionable Lacys, were on their way to London.